"They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
Mark 2:17

The Heavenly Balm

Schwenckfeld

The Heavenly Balm and the Divine Physician

Caspar Schwenckfeld

The Heavenly Balm and the Divine Physician or Jesus Christ, the True Physician, and Poor Sinful Man, the Wounded and Sick Patient

By Caspar Schwenckfeld

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NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR

The works of Caspar Schwenckfeld were written during the sixteenth century, none of which have hitherto appeared in an English dress. He was a devout Christian, and differing in some unessential points from the two great branches of the Church of the Reformation, he, in connection with others, founded a religious society. About the time of the American Revolution a colony of those who had adopted his peculiar views immigrated to this country, and settled in Montgomery and Bucks counties, Pennsylvania. They organized a few congregations, one in Bucks county, and one near Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia county. As their ministry was exclusively German, and their descendants grew up without learning the language, their congregations gradually declined until they ceased to have regular preaching in the lower congregation. As ten years of my early ministry were spent in the community where these families resided, I bear a cheerful testimony to the Christian character of these dear friends. Mr. Heydrick and others are among the most respectable and influential citizens in all that beautiful region of Whitemarsh. A number of their children and children's children became members of the Lutheran Church. Others of their descendants united with other denominations.

The fathers and mothers in their little communion were diligent readers of the Bible, and also highly valued the practical works of the founder of their society. With a view to benefit their children and others, and also with a noble desire to leave to their offspring and the world a monument of their faith, they engaged my services to translate *The Divine Physician and the Heavenly Balm*, and also *The Three Kinds of Life*, written by Caspar Schwenckfeld. They could not leave a more excellent and endearing testimonial of their love for Christ and precious souls.

As the German language has greatly changed in its construction, &c., I found it necessary in some instances to give it a free translation. I did, however, rigidly adhere to the text and faithfully rendered his ideas into English, even at the risk sometimes of making long sentences, though I trust sufficiently clear to the reader.

I take pleasure in commending the work to a Christian public. The author wrote with Christian simplicity and great earnestness of spirit, exhibiting as truly as forcibly the wretched state of man by nature; and having laid open the deep depravity of the heart and exhibited the wounds of the bleeding soul, he leads it to Christ, the heavenly Physician.

In his treatise on the *Three Kinds of Life*, he discusses very fully the rewards of good works; and if the reader may not coincide with the author in every particular, he will, notwithstanding, rise from its perusal with gratitude to God for the instruction which he has received while the motives of his actions were searched as by fire, by the sainted author, "who being dead yet speaketh."

F.R.A.

PREFACE

The Heavenly Balm, brought under review in these pages, is exceedingly precious. It is well described in the Holy Scriptures, and is essential to the salvation of sinners. It is especially pleasant to poor sinners who are anxious to be delivered from their sins; it is profitable and comforting to penitents, though comparatively few persons are concerned about it. To those, however, who appreciate the remedy which God has provided for the relief of human misery, it manifests how a merciful Father deals with His chosen whom He receives into His favor. He translates them from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Heaven, regenerates them, and thus heals the soul and restores it, through Jesus Christ, His Son and our Lord.

There are four distinct points which I propose to treat here, so that what follows may be more easily understood. In the first place—the spiritually sick are all those who are in a state of nature; all, without a single exception, who have sprung from the flesh and blood of Adam and Eve.

In the second place—the sickness is nothing else than the depraved, sinful nature, which leads to everlasting death, and under this depravity all men are included, that God might have mercy upon all. Rom. 11:32.

In the third place—Jesus Christ, with His grace, is the only physician of the afflicted soul, and not only for one, but for the entire race who became disobedient and depraved in Adam. God, the merciful Father of all, appointed Jesus as physician and Saviour of the perishing, after He had invested Him with all power and given Him a name above every other name, so that all who believe on Him should not perish, but that they might be saved and made happy.

In the fourth place—the medicine with which this physician heals our spiritual maladies and makes whole all wounded hearts, is pre-eminently the word of God, together

with the blood of Jesus Christ, which He poured out for the forgiveness of sin; that is, for the healing of our sickness and our everlasting well-being. All the prescriptions of this Divine Balm which are to secure the restoration of man or the salvation of sinners, must embrace the death, the martyrdom and blood-shedding of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is the one who prepares and applies the balm of life to the afflicted souls of men.

This world is a hospital, filled with afflicted, dying souls. We are all by nature sick and lying helpless before God, until awakened by the Son of God, and brought from the pestilential air of sin into a holy atmosphere, and separated from those who are still diseased. Should anyone regard the hospital as more appropriately symbolized by the Church, I will not object; for it is indeed true that the great Physician is ever active in His church in restoring the afflicted to health, as the good Samaritan carried the wounded man to an inn and had him cared for; provided that the spiritually sick whom Christ conducts into His fold do not continue to bear upon them the tokens of disease, but grow better from day to day.

What, then, is the healthfulness of the soul? It is nothing less than righteousness, holiness, and salvation. The person made whole is the new inward man; that is, created after God, in holiness, righteousness and truth, whom Paul admonishes us to put on, that we may be renewed in the spirit of our minds. Eph. 4:23.

The way of approach to this physician is the prayer of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him. Heb. 11.

In like manner as every physician aims to produce certain results by the mode of his practice, thus also does our heavenly Physician secure to those who submit to His treatment, regeneration, the forgiveness of sin, their

reception of the Holy Ghost, justification and sanctification; and in this state of holiness we are admonished to advance. And as those who have relieved men from bodily disease prescribe certain regulations of diet and exercise for the preservation of health, so also has our Physician, Jesus Christ, given rules in his Gospel and through His apostles, whereby our spiritual health is preserved, viz: that we should no longer sin, but lead a godly life and keep His commandments. We behold therefore in these particulars the entire course of treatment observed by Jesus Christ with His afflicted ones, whom He heals, besides other matters which will hereafter be more extensively treated in several chapters. May the Almighty and merciful God grant to us poor afflicted sinners grace, that we may faithfully rely on the Physician, Jesus, and make us partakers of His healing power unto everlasting life. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

Jesus Christ, the Divine Physician, and miserable, sinful Man, the Patient, the Wounded, or Sick.

When our beloved Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, called Matthew, the publican, to become His disciple, that he might be an apostle and evangelist, the latter made a feast in honor to his Lord, and many publicans and sinners sat at table with Him and His disciples. But when the scribes and Pharisees saw this, they murmured and said to his disciples, Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard this, he said unto them: The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick; but go learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Matthew 9:13, Luke 5:31,32.

Among other profitable things which our Lord Jesus presents and teaches in this portion of the Gospel, he first pictures the depravity, the inherited disease and misery of human nature, in connection with the grace of Almighty God, and His own exalted office as the anointed of God, which He performs in the restoration of man to the Divine favor. As man through the disobedience and fall of Adam became thoroughly depraved, diseased and frail, and now, as a poor sinner, stands in need of mercy, grace and help: thus, on the other hand, Jesus is the true Saviour, the only one who can heal the soul—the Physician, the Helper and the Redeemer of man.

Our heavenly Father, after investing his Son with all power, and giving him a name above every other name, offered him to all men as their physician and Saviour, and clothed Him with the office of healing the spiritually diseased: i.e. He is given to save us from our sins; therefore shall the sin-sick seek no other physician, but hasten to Jesus and confide only in His help and counsel. For such

power and like office and remedies are nowhere else found, neither can they appertain to anyone but Him; and he who presumes to cure souls by human power and wisdom, will only destroy them and conduct them to ruin.

Above all things should we diligently, by the exercise of Christian faith, study, ponder, understand, and impress upon our minds what we are by nature, what advantage Christ the Son of God is to us, and why He became incarnate, and what the efficacy and strength of His grace accomplish in us; how and by what means this Divine Physician of our souls is to meet the wants and remove the woes of our being. This He images in this parable and by many other beautiful representations in the Gospel; so that a sorrowful sinner, who ponders these things and believes the word of God, finds his heart overflowing with joy, for the word of the Lord is true, and what He has spoken, He will surely perform. Ps. 33:4.

Therefore I have, through the grace of God, to the praise of Jesus our Lord, and for the comfort of all afflicted and contrite consciences something to write concerning this physician and his heavenly balm, (as also concerning the sickness) that I may soothe the distressed. Let us however also consider and be admonished in regard to original sin and its fatal tendencies, which we have inherited from Adam, that we may more fully understand our state by nature, to the end that we may more earnestly seek the help and balm of this great Physician, and that, in the lively exercise of faith, we may obediently submit to his healing power.

CHAPTER 2

Concerning the Visitation of the Afflicted, and how Christ, through his manifold miracles and benevolence, manifested himself as the Everlasting Physician of Souls.

In the same manner as a faithful physician of the body takes in charge the sick and wounded; comforts and prescribes for them, using his best efforts to help them; eats and drinks with them; is considerate in respect to everything that can promote their recovery, or refresh and alleviate their minds, and patiently endures the unpleasant air of the sick-room, so that he may be of service to them—thus also has Jesus, our faithful soul-physician, subjected himself to the humiliations incident to our humanity, that He might deliver us from our woes. He compassionated the misery of depraved man, and was not ashamed of calling the humble His brethren. Even now He is present with every weeping penitent, neither does His love shrink from communion with the fallen, for whose sake He laid aside His glory and honor in heaven and descended to the dust of the earth; yea, He humbled himself to the death of the cross that He might heal mankind.

The fact that we are permitted to enjoy, without interruption, his offices and his spiritual balm, should greatly contribute to the comfort and assurance of the timid conscience. Our gracious Lord Jesus manifested in the commencement of His miracles, wrought for the benefit of man, the purposes of his mission. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, made the lame walk, cleansed the impure, set free those possessed of devils, and restored the dead to life, that by these outward benefits to man, He might symbolize those spiritual deliverances and mercies which the soul obtains through Him. He healed all manner of disorders among the people that He might thereby show that, after the accomplishment of His

sufferings and His ascension to heaven, where He opened the treasury of grace, He would, through the operations of the Holy Spirit, do for sin-sick souls what He had done for the bodies of men.

For in truth men are not otherwise constituted in the sight of God, in that which pertains to their spiritual nature, than those afflicted with divers disorders, such as lunatics and those possessed of evil spirits, whom Jesus healed according to the flesh. By nature, man is dead in sin, is possessed of the evil spirit, is blind, is deaf to the voice of God, dumb and offensive in the sight of the Lord; that is, he is morally diseased, miserable, and full of sin. These inward woes, connected with the depravity of the carnal man, were fully exposed by the Redeemer, and while healing the bodies of men, He assured them that He was also prepared to cure the spiritual maladies of the soul.

The Eternal Word, Jesus Christ, therefore assumed our nature and died, that He might awaken the soul from its death in sin, and deliver it out of that eternal condemnation into which it was plunged by the fall of Adam. It was the gracious purpose of our Lord to deliver man from the dominion of evil. He desired to open the eyes of his mind and the ears of his understanding, and enrich him with a perfect righteousness, with Divine wisdom and truth, that his conscience might rejoice in the assurance that Jesus had made him efficient to every good work to the praise of God.

What other meaning can we attach to the parable in Luke, concerning him who fell among thieves and murderers? Poor, afflicted man should console himself with the fact that that which the unfortunate man experienced in bodily comfort from the good Samaritan, the wounded soul receives like care and greater mercy from Jesus, for it is the privilege of all to enjoy the healing virtues of that balm which our heavenly Physician has brought to earth.

That the Redeemer performs these offices and is ready to bestow these blessings, is evident from that exhibition of love and compassion manifested in that amazing condescension which led Him into fellowship with afflicted and wretched sinners. He associated with the poor, the despised and ignorant; He taught them, walked with them, and did eat and drink with publicans and sinners, as the Gospel bears witness. Thus had the Son of God to risk the good opinion of men, and as a faithful physician He had to endure the reproach and all that was disagreeable in the fallen, so that He was held and adjudged, in the estimation of the Pharisees, as the companion of these men, and was regarded also as a sinner, a Samaritan, and as one allied with the devil. John 8:48. O, the amazing greatness of the love wherewith Christ Jesus loved us! Would that we might cherish a corresponding love in return, and that we might have hearts forever overflowing with gratitude to Him and our heavenly Father for such transcendent goodness.

CHAPTER 3

Concerning the Office of this Physician and the Sick whom he is to Heal, and how they must Realize that they are Sick.

The Gospel narrative informs us that, after the scribes and Pharisees, the high priest and rulers of the people, saw that the Lord did not shun such despised persons as publicans and sinners, but received invitations to their social entertainments, and made Himself acquainted with them, they murmured and, being displeased, spoke disparagingly of the Lord: "Behold a man, gluttonous and a wine-bibber, the friend of publicans and sinners." Matt 11:19. As if they would say—were He such a holy man as He is esteemed by some, and a true prophet; yea, were He the Messiah, as He pretends to be, He would doubtless conduct Himself with more dignity; He would not associate so much with disreputable people.

The Lord answered them with great prudence and propriety: "A physician is not for the whole and the strong, for they do not require his services, but for the weak and sick." By which He meant to show that He was a physician who came expressly for the sake of the afflicted, and that His mission was confined only to such as were needy and lowly. Further, He declared what kind of physician He was, viz: for the soul, the heavenly physician of all mankind, wherefore He says—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

After He had given the Pharisees to understand plainly that the objections which they raised against Him, by which they meant to disparage His character, namely, His fellowship with sinners, were rather a commendation, since the object of His labors was to lead them to repentance. This was a work of grace. Let those sinners, then, who receive this Physician with a view to obtain spiritual health, and who earnestly desire to become acceptable to God

through Him, understand that it becomes them henceforth to love righteousness, to lay aside all evil, and to perseveringly pursue a chaste and godly life. Who, then, are the spiritually sick, according to the teachings of the Gospel? Assuredly those who have felt their condition, and who, in obedience to the call of Christ, have come out from the world, and having been healed by his grace, now compose the congregation of Jesus, for whose sake he came from heaven into our world. For this reason did the Son of God become flesh, that He might call sinful men to repentance, regenerate them, sanctify them, and make their hearts His abode. The Word became clothed with our disordered humanity, that He might restore it to a healthful and holy condition—that the soul, the heart and the conscience, naturally impure, might be cleansed from the pollutions of sin. "And the redeemed shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord. My spirit that is upon thee, and my words that I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed."

The Lord Jesus moreover unfolded to the arrogant Pharisees the state of their own hearts, of which they were profoundly ignorant, in that He says, I am come not on account of the righteous, that is, for the sake of those who are lifted up with a sense of their personal holiness, and comparing others with their standard of moral excellence, condemn them, of which we have a forcible illustration in Luke 18:11-14, in the Pharisee and the publican. For the benefit of such I did not come (says our Lord;) for they have no need of the balm of life, since, trusting in their personal goodness, are not conscious that they need my help. Why? Because they are their own physicians, believe they know other healing sources, and notwithstanding they discover some tokens of disease about them, they do not see

themselves as God sees them, poor, miserable and sick, but such only Jesus came to heal and to save. The humble who are painfully conscious of their spiritual malady, who understand the plague of their hearts, who acknowledge their wretched depravity, who lament and mourn over their sins; and who also heartily desire to obtain health from God —i.e., grace and piety; these are the persons whom I came to redeem.

Such are, with Zaccheus, truly Abraham's children, to whom is promised the kingdom of heaven. To such our Lord declares shall be imparted help, consolation and life. As the holy Jews (as they esteemed themselves, but who were really full of evil) murmured when He entered into the house of Zaccheus, who was regarded as a sinner, to enjoy his hospitality, He rebuked them for their want of charity when He said: "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Which means, that Jesus Christ, the heavenly physician, came to visit and to heal the manifold infirmities of poor sinners, who before God are sick, corrupt and estranged from the life of God, and dead under the dominion of evil.

In like manner do we read in the Gospel according to St. John, where the miracle of restoring sight to one born blind is recorded: "I came to judge the world, so that those that are blind may be made to see, and those who see may become blind." Those who do not see, are those truly humble souls who realize their sinfulness, from which the blindness of the heart proceeds, and fly in the exercise of faith to Christ, the restorer of the blind, the enlightener of all souls who have recourse to Him for help. But those who are the seeing, of whom the Lord here speaks, are the proud Pharisees, who vainly supposed that they saw and understood all things, but who were totally ignorant of their evil and malicious hearts; therefore must their condition remain as it is, and their sins rest upon their own heads.

Jesus desired to convey the same idea in that Gospel record where he says: “The whole need not the physician, but the sick, and I came to call sinners and not the righteous to repentance.” As if he had said: There is come from heaven a physician to this world with extraordinary powers, in order that through Him the sick may be made whole and the whole may become sick. That the poor in God might be rich, and the rich might become poor; that the sinner might be justified and the righteous might be condemned, that is, lost forever. This is seldom understood, for sinful man finds it too high to comprehend it, but he who repents and is converted and receives from God the spirit of humility and love, feels the plague of his heart and receives Christ with joy as the physician of his soul.

CHAPTER 4

Concerning the Faithfulness, Love and Mercy of the Divine Physician, as illustrated in the Faith, Consolation and Hope which he awakens in Afflicted Souls.

And now I will proclaim and praise the faithfulness and love of our most gracious Physician, Jesus Christ, and according to my humble ability write further concerning Him, if but one among the many thousands of spiritually sick will but lay his heart at the feet of Jesus, commit himself entirely to His healing power, and seek in Him his true health, I shall be amply rewarded. Rather than see our afflicted and wounded humanity sink into perdition and die the second death, our magnanimous Physician suffered himself to be wounded and smitten for man, became afflicted with our disease, so that from the crown of His head to the sole of His feet there were wounds and bruises; yea, not only was He greatly afflicted, but He even died for us. His death was both ignominious and painful, viz: the death of the cross, that wretched man might be healed through His pains and blood. Thus is the sinner made whole by the affliction, and is made alive by the death of his Physician. Through His shame, man is raised to honor, glory and immortality.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." 1 John 4:9,14. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." All of which is made known to afflicted mankind, and is designed for the consolation of all sinners, through the faithfulness and compassion of Jesus Christ, our heavenly Physician.

Saint Paul says to his beloved Ephesians—"Wherefore I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus; that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the length and the breadth, and the height and the depth: And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." He would indicate that Christ loved us so intensely, and still loves us so ardently, that no man without special grace and extraordinary revelations from God can understand or portray that love.

The Lord Jesus himself speaks of this amazing condescension when he discoursed with His disciples and said: "As my Father has loved me, even so have I loved you. No man has greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." And this Christ did, as He elsewhere declares: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28. And again: "I am the good shepherd; a good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." John 10:11. And in the same chapter, v. 15: "I lay down my life for the sheep."

Now as Jesus is the only true shepherd who surrendered His life for the sheep, with whom they find green pastures and enjoy full happiness; thus also is He the merciful high priest and the bishop of our souls, who himself was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, so that He might sympathize with our weakness and succor those who are tempted. In like manner is He the only faithful physician, who gives and distributes His body and blood, yea, all that He has, for the restoration of many afflicted and poor sinners. That through Him lost souls may be delivered from sin and its evils, and through Jesus obtain salvation and peace, and be crowned with everlasting glory.

CHAPTER 5

The heavenly Physician was himself afflicted, smitten and crucified, that miserable Man might be made alive through Him and have his beauty and health renewed.

Call him what you will, there is no physician on earth who would subject himself to such sacrifices as the Redeemer endured for man. None other feels such an interest in his patients as to take upon himself their sufferings and languishings if he could, much less would consent to die for them. But Jesus, our precious, holy physician, very cheerfully endured the sufferings that were due to the guilty, and after having borne in His own person the griefs and sorrows of sinners, bestows upon penitent transgressors everlasting health. Finally, this Divine Physician took upon himself the shame of our entire afflicted race; as it is written where, through the spirit of prophecy, He recounts His sorrows: "Reproach has broken my heart and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Ps. 69:20,21.

Concerning all these amazing transactions did Isaiah prophecy, long anterior to their occurrence, when casting his prophetic eye upon the suffering Messiah he exclaims: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." That is, so blinded and perverted were men, that they did not apprehend the meaning and true significance of those agonies and reproaches endured by the Saviour. As they were ignorant of the great love of this physician, they never supposed that He designed to help them, but regarded Him as one who had himself become obnoxious to the law of God; in like manner as those still consider his

death, who are not moved with gratitude to God for a crucified Redeemer.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." That is, on account of our misery did He assume these infirmities and griefs; for our sins did He appear upon the cross as one accursed, as a sinner and malefactor. Not that He had sinned, for in Him was no guile, but He there suffered in the room of sinners. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53:5. Yea, that we might have everlasting peace in our conscience, in our souls and hearts, and that through His wounds we might be made whole. For those wounds are fountains of spiritual health, they send streams of healing over our afflicted and weary world. "All we like sheep had gone astray;" each one in his own way, (the way of perdition,) "but the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all." O this is a consoling truth to the penitent sinner, also to the dying who devoutly ponder it, and to all who through faith and the Holy Spirit have rightly learned these precious truths and treasured them up in their hearts. Furthermore does the prophet continue: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days," (that is, He shall after His suffering rise again from the dead and through divine power bring forth humanity new and immortal,) "and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." That is, the heavenly balm which issues from the Saviour's wounds and the healing work which it shall accomplish upon poor sinners, will be carried forward by the hand of the Lord. Thus shall the sick be made whole, the sinner become righteous; because His soul labored on the cross for them in the martyrdom which He endured. And now that the balm of healing has been provided in the shedding of His blood, He

will behold his pleasure in the vivifying and restoring effects of the only medicine that cures the sin-sick soul.

"He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death." Through the work of His mediation the Father has exalted him Lord over all, so that He reigns in the hearts of those afflicted sinners whom he heals, enriches with grace and sanctifies, while He exercises dominion over the sick and the whole, the dead and the living.

Behold, then, thou inquirer after the Beautiful and the Good, this is our God, our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, through whose help and knowledge alone we can become just and holy, and inherit everlasting life! O how precious and invaluable is this true knowledge of this heavenly physician, Jesus Christ! It is the only science (the science of salvation) which men may study through all their life without exhausting its treasures. The only one, by which they become learned, are made rich in experience, and perfect, since His knowledge, as He himself declares, brings with it everlasting life and makes us partakers of the divine nature.

It should surprise no one, that unworthy as I am, that from my own experience and in the presence of all true believers, I bear testimony of His goodness, and to the extent of my ability strive to acquaint everyone with His love and beneficence. For I would proclaim it to all mankind, that I know Him to be the truly begotten Son of God, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. He has (to His praise be it spoken) manifested most tenderly His offices and skill in the application of this spiritual balm to my diseased soul; and continues to do so in the daily ministrations of the healing influences of His grace to my body and soul. When I

fall He raises me up; in seasons of trial He supports me; when in danger He delivers; when I err He guides me, when I go astray He brings me back; when I am smitten He pours oil into my wounds and heals me; and if I have need of anything, He provides for me. O, He is the faithful everlasting Father, as the prophet Isaiah calls Him, in chapter 9:6. What a debt of gratitude do I owe Him for His kindness in showing to me, His unworthy child, the true road (which He is himself) to the attainment of a good conscience, and to everlasting life. Truly He has delivered my soul from death, my feet from falling, that I might walk before God in the light of life.— Ps. 56:13.

What wilt thou say, O my soul, in the presence of such transcendent love? "It is a faithful saying, and one worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Aye, for this reason He receives me in mercy, though so unworthy that I might be under the greater obligation to adore His love—to admire His grace and truth—to show forth His divine glory, that others, now in a lost and ruined state, might be induced to seek Him as their only Saviour. Wherefore should we not then praise this man, Jesus of Nazareth, and receive Him, in all His offices, as our Lord, and strive to magnify Him in the estimation of others? To the God-Man we can never ascribe too much honor. I could wish, therefore, with all my heart, that God the Father would grant to all the afflicted and sorrowful, a saving knowledge of His Son Jesus. For whoever knows this physician, and apprehends him by the eye of faith as the source of help, is already relieved, and all His wounds will be healed by the Lord of glory. He has peace and joy; for this physician can, by His almighty power, so thoroughly heal the deepest wounds that sin has inflicted, that they are altogether obliterated in the sight of God, and there will remain nothing upon the renovated soul that would make it an object of displeasure to the Most High. The

evil conscience is displaced by a conscience at peace with Heaven; and in this state of grace there is a consciousness of the indwelling righteousness and love of God. Yea, through the efficacy of His power, "He renews man's youth like the eagle's, and crowns him with grace and glory." Ps. 103:4,5. So pre-eminent is the skill of this physician, that none of those afflicted souls who commit themselves to His care, and abide under His direction to the end, shall ever perish or taste the second death.

CHAPTER 6

The Gracious Invitation of the Holy Ghost, to the Afflicted, to come to Jesus Christ, the heavenly Physician.

With a view to appreciate more fully and to admire more joyfully the love of God, as manifested in the gift of His Son, let us carefully ponder what Paul writes in Rom. 5:6, &c.: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

This is a very precious portion of scripture, full of spiritual wealth, containing the invitation of the Holy Spirit to afflicted souls, and in which the entire office of our Divine Physician is embraced, admired and unfolded. This part of the Holy Word is very appropriate to dying believers, and should by all means be read and expounded to those on a dying bed, that their affections may be directed to Christ, since there is nothing which displays the immeasurable love and mercy of God towards us poor sinners so fully as the bitter sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus. What can be better fitted to strengthen our faith and to pacify our consciences, than the remembrance that the beloved Son of God offered himself up as a sacrifice for the ungodly, for His and His Father's enemies? That He is our Redeemer and has paid the price of our ransom? Where can you find a physician who would without compensation administer a

remedy to his mortal enemy who might again attempt his life? Who would take upon himself a grievous illness, to relieve a sworn foe from it? We will not even mention such a thing as to die for another. Where did it ever happen in this world, that anyone died for an unrighteous person? Perhaps some good person might die for one whom he loves. Many also die for the public good, and a few, as history informs us, have laid down their life for the cause of truth.

But Jesus Christ, our gracious and holy Lord, died for the ungodly, forasmuch as He died while we were yet sinners, without strength and ungodly, yea, while we were His enemies. How much more will He now, (after the accomplishment of His cruel death and having poured out His blood for us,) being risen, and living, and reigning as our Mediatorial King, vouchsafe to us the blessings of His salvation? For if through the death of Christ we were reconciled to God, how much more beneficial to us is His Divine Life in heaven, where the God-Man, in and with God, triumphs and rules? He is our advocate with the Father, and not only shields us from the wrath of God and heals our spiritual maladies, but He bestows on us the Holy Ghost, gives the spirit of adoption and love, in which we rejoice in God, as heirs of the kingdom of heaven and of all heavenly riches, and receive them as our own. The sainted Paul, in the scripture already cited, proclaims for the everlasting consolation of the wretched children of earth, the riches of Divine grace in Jesus Christ. Why should we not avail ourselves of all the good, the healing power and comfort which this gracious physician offers so freely to all? Why should we not desire to have this restorer of the soul, and greatly delight in His presence? Why not love him and follow his advice? And who would not, if he has only learned to know this Saviour, unite with the pious David in the beautiful psalm and sing: "O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. Let the

redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Ps. 107. Come, Lord Jesus, come and relieve our sickness; take away our sins and imperfections, make us whole and strengthen us, that we may serve thee to the praise of thy glory!

CHAPTER 7

The Skill of our heavenly Physician, and his own Invitation to the Afflicted to come unto him.

To the eternal praise of Jesus, I will yet relate a brief account from Isaiah, which contains those testimonials of skill which He, like all other unknown physicians, publishes to the world. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted—to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God—to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion—to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning—the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."—Isa. 61:1-3.

Behold, then, here you have the consoling credentials of our spiritual physician, setting forth His ability and the efficacy of His healing balm, on the testimony of the prophet, who, through the Holy Spirit, predicted, long before our Saviour's incarnation, the character he would exhibit and the offices he would fill. When the Redeemer made His appearance in the synagogue at Nazareth, he opened the Scriptures and read the above quotation from Isaiah, and having closed the book, said—"To-day is this scripture fulfilled before your eyes, and they all bore witness, and were astonished at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth."

In like manner does our Lord, in other parts of the Gospel, graciously invite everyone to become a partaker of His grace—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." To me, saith the Lord, come

only to me to whom the Father has given all power, and appointed me the divine physician, the deliverer and Saviour of mankind. To him shall all afflicted, sorrowful hearts come, notwithstanding their spiritual maladies—let them cheerfully and freely come. I will give you rest from your sins, rest from the heavy and intolerable yoke and burden of an accusing conscience, and will heal your soul.

This matchless physician, Jesus Christ, as He more fully represents His faithfulness and the singular efficacy of His balm, does not appear clothed with that pomp and worldly honor that sometimes invest other physicians, but comes before men without ostentation and clothed with humility as He further speaks of His office. "You will no doubt address to me the proverb, Physician, heal thyself." As if He would say, I do not seek my own honor and profit, or well-being, with my medicine, as others who practice the healing art, who often seek not the interest of the sick, but who desire to enrich themselves and their friends by their art. I seek to benefit the sick to the praise of God my Father, who sent me upon this mission, that I might give everything, even myself, to their advantage, that deliverance might be brought to them, as it is foretold by the prophet. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they called thee an outcast, saying: "This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after." Jer. 30:17. That is the flock of Christ, which is still in the eyes of the world unprofitable, and its members are esteemed as outcasts and self-righteous fanatics. To such an office of the spiritual healing art was the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth, set apart and anointed by the Father with the fulness of the Holy Ghost. He was instinct with the oil of joy, and filled with heavenly balm, so that He shed around His path a delicious fragrance, and that He might always, while the day of grace endures, proclaim joyful news, heal the sick, enlighten the ignorant, comfort the distressed, and

strengthen and refresh the weary pilgrims of earth. But who will participate in these blessings? Surely those only who realize that they are poor, afflicted, blind, but who, while they lament their wretchedness, exercise faith in the Redeemer. Take heed, therefore, beloved reader, that you may properly understand your sickness, and daily renew your resolution to seek health for your soul in the wounds of Jesus, prayerfully consider also his divine calling; for all these things, as already stated, redound to the glory of God. For the more earnestly we seek him, and the more confidently we commit our souls to his care, so much the more do we honor His unspeakable love which He manifested towards the children of men.

Concerning all this does the prophet Isaiah truly predict when he exclaims: "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors! they have forsaken the Lord; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward, &c. The whole head is sick and the heart is faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Isa. 1:4,6. And Jeremiah, chap. 15:18 says: "Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed." "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved." Jer. 17:14. Behold how the Spirit of God, through the prophets, portrays the depravity of man and his spiritual sickness under the imagery of the ancient economy, and presents the Jewish people as examples to us of those whose afflictions are confessed in these prophecies. Mark also how he speaks of sin as a fatal disease, and represents it by wounds which no one can heal but God. The Holy Spirit further delineates the unspeakable evil effects produced by sin, that feeling the wretchedness it occasions and the anguish it kindles,

they might, under a consciousness of their sad state look forward with more earnest yearnings to the promised physician as the restorer of Israel.

That sin is the most intolerable plague that can befall man; yea, so agonizing and distressing to the soul, that even the worst of bodily diseases known on earth afford but an imperfect emblem of its malignity and virulence—those will most readily concede who have been properly convicted, and felt it as the gnawings of the undying worm in their conscience. O Lord, my God, if there were no advice, no hope, and no comfort held out to the awakened sinner in the Gospel, what would be the result? Did not the gracious Physician come to the sinner's rescue, his nature could not long endure the fear and sorrow, but would sink under the dread burden.

The individual who has such a knowledge of his depravity, is prepared to pour out the experience of his heart in the seven penitential and other Psalms, and cry with David, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy great compassion, for mine iniquities have gone over my head, they are a burden too heavy to be borne. I am sore, broken and bruised. I cry and have no rest in my heart, my tears have been my meat and drink. My heart within me faileth. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has seized my soul. O God, help me, for thy name's sake, for the terrors of death encompass me and the pains of hell gat hold of me."

From this it may be inferred what a sore and intolerable evil sin must be; for he who can thus speak of his spiritual sickness without hypocrisy, as David certainly did, must assuredly first realize fear, anguish, and the need of help. He must have been sorrowful, weak and sick personally, and to such an extent that he could pray for the necessities of all the pious, and lament before God the evil that attaches to our humanity. When this is felt, then is it

the proper time to call on the physician, and speedily go to Him and commit the healing of the soul to Him. Then may the afflicted turn to the true Physician with a lively faith and, awaiting His help, say: "O Lord, heal me, for I am sick. O God, speak peace to my soul. Say, I am thy salvation (Lord Jesus) while there is no soundness in me."

Behold, the Lord presents still more gracious promises, through his prophets! "Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified." Ps. 40:16. Such promises are a sure testimony and a solid ground of hope, that all who seek our Lord Jesus with an earnest heart and in faith, will speedily be delivered by him from the terrible evil of sin and be made joyful and whole.

The matter resolves itself, therefore, into this, as intimated: let those who truly realize their sinful condition, and who feel the plague of their own hearts, earnestly long after the physician, Jesus Christ; for if they do feel their misery they will yield up everything in order to obtain help. For such are the tortures of an accusing conscience, that they are fitly represented by the gnawings of the undying worm, and then in this soul agony there is a pressure on every side, and the whole world is but a prison of the immortal spirit, and the awful burden of guilt is such that if not removed by Jesus, it will sink the soul into the depths of despair, where it will experience the pangs of the second death. O it is amid the dark horrors of that hour of indescribable misery when the agitated spirit rushes into the arms of Jesus, that His worth is appreciated and the vastness of His benevolence is felt.

It would be truly wonderful if he could be joyful who has a realizing sense of his spiritual sickness, and properly considers the fatal effects in which it must issue, if not cured; strange indeed if he, destitute of Jesus Christ and without his balm, could be otherwise than miserable in the

extreme. We have numerous examples in Holy Scripture of the wretchedness which an awakened conscience produces. One, and a noble example, exclaims: "I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with tears." Another says: "Whether I eat or drink, wake or sleep, or whatever I do, there is a voice ringing in my ears, arise ye dead and come to judgment." This dreadful depravity and this lost condition of the unregenerate soul, is discovered by some only in the hour of death, when they have a foretaste of the first judgment of God; and if the physician, Jesus Christ, does not come to their rescue they are lost forever, for without Christ and His balm none can inherit everlasting life.

Therefore I said, that such a spiritually sick and anguished person, without Christ, will find this world too narrow for him, since he feels the painfulness of those wounds which sin has made, and cannot obtain rest, because the terrors of perdition have laid hold upon him; so that he may very truly exclaim with the affrighted David: "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness." Ps. 55:6,7. And again he says: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Ps. 69:1,2.

CHAPTER 8

Forasmuch as the sickness of the soul is a weighty calamity, so much the more should we rejoice in the gracious and consoling healing power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That the sickness of the soul is such an alarming and great evil that no one can advise or afford relief but the physician, Jesus Christ, God has clearly revealed through the prophet. "For thus saith the Lord: Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds." Jer. 30:12,13,17. And in Psalm 147:3, "He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds."

In a case of bodily disease, where the malady is an obstinate and dangerous one, praise will redound to the skill of the physician, in proportion to the difficulties which He overcomes in the restoration of health. We should above all things consider the inexpressible virulence of our spiritual sickness; forasmuch as the soul is far nobler than the body, thus also, without doubt, is the malady with which it is afflicted greater, more dangerous and more intolerable than all the plagues which may visit the body. As it is manifest, moreover, that persons who are suffering under bodily indisposition, or as they conceive are in the agonies of death, send a great distance and without reference to expense for those who are celebrated physicians, and as these afflicted ones rejoice when those skilled in the healing art arrive to prescribe for them, are comforted by their presence, and even derive hope and improvement from the words and the looks of the physician: thus also can believers learn and appreciate the immense value, the divine power and loveliness of the soul's Physician from this image of the feelings and experience of those who are languishing under bodily pains. As the sickness of the soul is severer, more

fatal and intolerable than that of the body, so much the more should those who are conscious of this rejoice that they know this eminent physician, Jesus Christ, that he is accessible to them; for they are already assured that He stands at their door and knocks, and only waits the pleasure of the sin-sick soul to invite Him, that He may help and heal. Rev. 3:20.

O how touching is the attitude of our Lord Jesus towards us! Behold, daily is He stretching out His hand to deliver us from all manner of sickness and danger—yea, from all evil, as He is personified by Solomon under Wisdom, Prov. 1:24,25: "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded. But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof." We are, however, lacking most of all in this, that as poor patients and foolish persons we do not properly realize the great evil, and the mortal sickness of our souls—nay, are sometimes unwilling to learn our true condition, or we would cheerfully and without intermission inquire for Jesus Christ and strive to obtain a knowledge of His healing balm. We would answer His call, and gladly hear of Him; yea, we would rejoice in His presence, and seek our highest consolation in His word and find His smiles the joy and sunlight of our souls.

CHAPTER 9

The nature of Spiritual Sickness, and whence its origin.

What is this sickness of the soul? It is nothing else, as already partially stated, but sin with its power, with its fear and its sting; this weighty and intolerable evil, and the depravity of our minds, as it is portrayed in one of the penitential Psalms of David: "O Lord, be merciful unto me, and heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." And again: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sins." "My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness." Here we see that the sickness and the wounds of the soul from which the prophet desired and prayed to be delivered was nothing else but sin, together with its energies and all the evil which it inflicts upon man. It includes also that unrest which always accompanies it in the soul, the undying worm, the trembling and fear of hell and the second death, and the wrath and trouble from an unreconciled God, with which the conscience of the righteous soul is tormented. It is the torment and pain, yea, the everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and glory of his power. 2 Thes. 1:9.

For sin divorces the soul forever from that God who is the highest and the most unspeakably glorious good. "Your iniquities," saith the Holy Ghost, in Isa. 59:2, "separate between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face, that your prayers are not heard." Such as the dead and already offensive Lazarus whom the Lord called from the sleep of death would appear in the eyes of an effeminate earthly king, so does much more the corrupt sinner appear in the sight of the pure God and Jesus, the king of heaven. Therefore it must needs be that sin—that is, this soul-sickness—where it is not removed, will separate from God and rob the individual of the divine glory. Sin also makes

angels sorrowful, injures our neighbor, and divides the communion of saints. Sin, where it triumphs, grieves the Holy Ghost, dispels the energies of the inner man, and conducts into gross darkness, yea, into the terrors of the second death.

How could we conceive of a more dreadful sickness, or plague, or misfortune, than that which may not only be attended with fatal effects to the diseased, but breathes a blighting and destructive influence upon those who associate with him? And as no one can long endure the odor that arises from a decomposing corpse, so neither can angels or the children of the Most High (much less God himself) endure the offensiveness and fellowship of gross impenitent sinners, unless indeed they are led astray and poisoned by the wicked. This disease of the soul, like a cancer, eats its way, and as it consumes the inner moral strength, it destroys and triumphs over the outer man. 1 Cor. 5:11. In a word, soul-sickness is the most injurious and distressing evil. It is the undying worm in the sinful heart of man, which in several portions of the Psalms, and also in other parts of Holy Scripture, is variously designated, but has always associated with it an image of the greatest distress and pain. It is called the bands of death, the pains of hell, thunder and lightning, fire and brimstone. For as an object struck by the thunderbolt is set on fire by the lightning, so also is the conscience of the ungodly sinner smitten by the thunders of divine wrath through the convictions of the Spirit and kindled with the fires of remorse that burn and agitate the sinner, so that no one can extinguish it but the God-Man, the heavenly physician, Jesus Christ.

O God, help us, that we may all be delivered in this world from this dreadful illness, and escape the awful vengeance of fire, by being made whole and saved. It should, however, be carefully remarked that this original sickness is internal and affects the heart, the soul and the

conscience; that the injury is not merely in the flesh, but extends to the whole depraved nature; that it works from within and diffuses its poison through the whole being, just as a cancer enters the blood and is carried through the whole body,—so that the effects of this disease are seen in the words and works of man; yea, even in matters which he may deem blameless. As, therefore, the seat of this malady is within, it becomes necessary to copy the example of those eminent in the healing art, and attack the foundations of the disease, pull it up by its roots, or it will remain unsubdued and break out afresh; and the oftener it is allowed to do this, the worse it will become.

Our physician, Jesus Christ, fully acquainted with the nature of the plague of our hearts, begins to restore health and the fountain of life, that his spiritual health may unfold itself in a life of penitence and love and holiness. Our gracious deliverer opens the heart through the quickening influences of His Spirit and purifies it through the faith which He inspires. "Out of the (natural) heart proceed evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, uncleanliness, murder, theft, avarice, false witness, lust, pride and folly." The renewed heart is filled with opposite affections, and being thus occupied there is no place for that which is unholy.

I felt anxious to present these views, for the reason that there are teachers and preachers who have no just conceptions of this spiritual sickness, neither do they understand its nature, nor recognize the seat of the disease; but, supposing it to reside only in the flesh and in the outward actions of men, they, therefore, strive to remove the malady by outward correctives, or a mere reformation of manners. As they do not seek the root of the disease in the soul and conscience, they can form but a low estimate of the efficacy of the Redeemer's spiritual balm, neither do they present its true value, and therefore all their efforts to benefit the afflicted are worthless, nay, positively injurious

to the souls who submit to their guidance. Such do not resort to the heavenly physician, Jesus Christ, nor to the treasury of his grace, but, as we have already said, undervalue the help of Christ, and would themselves be esteemed as physicians of the soul. As such they may give good consolation, but in the end it becomes manifest to the sin-sick soul that it is lost, and laments that it rejected the only true physician, Jesus Christ. These men should be reproved for their presumption, while a Christian people should be warned not to accord to another the honor that is due from all men to the only true physician, Jesus Christ. But upon this point (God willing) we will hereafter speak.

Do you then ask, whence comes this sickness? I answer: The sickness or depravity of the soul proceeds originally from the disobedience and the transgression of God's commandments. It is an inherited disease, it is the evil sap or life as it flows from our progenitors in Eden to us. When Adam rebelled against his Lord and Maker, he sundered that bond of union which made him immortal and holy, and he was smitten with death and became corrupt, and all who are born into the world are partakers of the same evil nature. Thus was this fatal malady introduced into the world by one man, and then passed upon all and is rooted in their being, which is abundantly proved by the penalty, which is death, (the wages of sin,) that is now visited upon all mankind. Such is the testimony of the Holy Ghost, as given by Paul. Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21. But fallen man is frequently not satisfied with this inherited sickness, but by numerous transgressions increases his misery, and through a gross and disorderly life augments his spiritual maladies, so that his restoration and salvation are rendered almost hopeless.

CHAPTER 10

Concerning those who have partially realized their Spiritual Sickness, but who do not properly know, nor desire to know Jesus and his Balm.

At a former period there were some who, having realized their spiritual sickness, that is, a consciousness of sin and the gnawing worm in their conscience, fled to a monastery, yea from one cloister to another, with the hope of obtaining deliverance for their souls. These took upon themselves stringent observances, submitted to painful exercises, and expected by good works, and various ceremonies and penances, to secure spiritual health without the aid of Jesus Christ.

They determined to subdue their sins by mortifications of the flesh, and trusted for deliverance from the pains of death and hell to fasting and prayer. But can the health of the soul be found in these outward observances? Do these enshrine the treasures of peace, joy and salvation? Alas, no! These are divine gifts, and can only be correctly sought by faith in Jesus Christ, and in no other object can they be found or hoped for.

Concerning such afflicted souls does God speak under the image of the children of Israel, in the prophecy of Hosea: "Ephraim is oppressed (that is, in his conscience) and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and unto the house of Judah as rottenness. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb; yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound." Hos. 5:11-13.

Those who elsewhere than with Jesus, the Divine Physician, seek for some balm to heal their wounded spirits, or by some antidote of their own devising, such as their own

imperfect righteousness, by which they try to make themselves whole, are like those who resort to pictures of saints, pious pilgrimages, or to soothsayers and astrologers for the purpose of obtaining help in bodily affliction. They may imagine that they derive benefit from such means and console themselves with this idea, although the disease is unbroken, which will become manifest in the day of adversity and especially in death, when they perish in unbelief and sink appalled with fear into hell. Such persons are like Ahab, who sent messengers to Baal, while he was sick, to ascertain whether he should recover from his illness; but whom Elijah sent back to the king, saying: "Thou shalt not arise from the bed on which thou liest, but shalt surely die." 2 Kings 1:4.

The penitence and resolution of such persons are not based upon the proper foundation, for although they may acknowledge their sickness and desire to be freed from it, yet they would be relieved from the evil of sin upon their own merits. Their sorrow and repentance do not spring from the love of God. It is not the dying of the old man and the quickening of the new creature; neither is this change after the only legitimate rule of the physician, Jesus Christ, in the freeness of his Spirit, but it originates rather in self-love, and arises only from the fear of the pains of perdition, which they have merited by their sins, and there is therefore no recognition of the only physician, helper and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It is therefore evident that no repentance or reformation is genuine if it be not in accordance with the requisitions of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; for that which is not in conformity with the direction of this Divine physician, cannot minister to the restoration of the soul's health. Through the delusions of Satan, some may imagine themselves in a healthful condition and despise the warning of God. "Because ye have said—we have made a covenant

with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." Isa. 28:15. But while they provided themselves with a false refuge and a deceitful protection, they shall not be able to stand in the evil day. For the enemy can apparently heal a spiritual malady, that is, induce a renunciation of some gross vices, but while destroying one evil, he may pierce the heart with many other fatal darts.

The heart may be lulled into a false security while it is filled with the love of honor, the pride of life, hatred, malice, bitterness, discontent, carnal security, unbelief, spiritual pride, and glory in an ostentatious holiness, and relying on its own merits, although it is under the power of these and other reigning sins. The most alarming spiritual state is that where a soul is afflicted with every plague, and yet esteems itself in a hopeful condition. Satan, our most artful enemy, may, when he sees a soul congratulating itself upon its supposed spiritual excellencies, leave it undisturbed for a season; but as the end approaches and the realities of the judgment of God are pressing upon the mind, then will conscience awake from its slumbers and inflict the pangs of the gnawing worm. Alas! then, when there is no more help, will it be seen that out of Christ, the great physician, there is no health nor safety for the soul.

There are other persons who deceive themselves by not understanding the nature of spiritual sickness. Such perhaps for the want of instruction remain ignorant of their spiritual disease, so that at first they cannot regard themselves as sinners, as they recognize sin only in gross outward transgressions and not in evil desires and intentions. Hence they suppose that as long as their desires do not break out in gross sins, they have no occasion to sorrow over them nor repent. Such persons do not honor

their Lord Jesus, forasmuch as they slight Him as their High-priest and heavenly physician. Although they may frequently speak of Him, confess Him and call upon his name; yet all this takes place without implying that He should heal their soul-sickness, or that he should forgive their sins; but only to manifest that they have through him and his intercessions, a preference, before all others to the full fruitions of heaven. It is not, therefore, with an humble faith that they worship him, but by their self-complacency they minister to the gratification of the flesh, and by manifold works they presume to purchase the favor of God and eternal life.

The reason why individuals of this description have such unworthy views of God, and know as little about their spiritual maladies as children, is to be sought in their own erroneous plans, and that order of life which they have established. Inasmuch as in the beginning of their reformation they do not rightly apprehend the nature of their moral disease, and therefore, do not apply to Jesus Christ as the only physician of the soul—neither seek with earnest hearts that balm of healing power which he bestows. But how false and unjust such a view is before God, and into what a dangerous situation such are placed, is sufficiently evident from the preceding remarks. I brought these points forward at this place, as an illustration, that we might first of all have a correct view of our sickness, and behold it in all its properties and trace it into all its hiding places in the chambers of the heart. That is, that we might know sin in all its internal and external power and operations. "For we are all unclean, and our righteousness is as filthy rags. We all do fade as the leaf, and are driven away by our iniquities." Isa. 64:6.

Again, it is not enough simply to understand properly the nature of sin and the character of our spiritual sickness; but we must also have a knowledge of the physician, and

seek him in faith and out of love to him. Then only does the consolation of the Holy Ghost properly arise in the heart through which we become conscious of the joyful health of the soul, as in the case of David. What does he say to such? "Let all that put their trust in thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them; let them, also, that love thy name be joyful in thee." Ps. 5:11.

At this period it also happens that there are persons who understand their afflicted state, who do not attempt like those mentioned to heal their spiritual maladies by the balm of their own works; but as they only have a knowledge of the letter and not of the spirit of God's word, they strive to heal by writings or signs, or some other outward methods. These build their faith and the hope of their salvation alone upon the letter of the promise, or a few passages of Scripture without the spirit, and consequently their life is without improvement. Yea, these hear, but do not the will of God, and thus build their house upon the sand, Matt. 7:27, and do not come to the rock Christ Jesus. They, therefore, come short of life, for in him are all the promises fulfilled, and he is the only dispenser of all heavenly gifts, yea, He alone giveth salvation, grace and everlasting well-being, to whom also the Holy Scriptures with all outward churchly solemnities point as they all speak gloriously of him and his office.

To him, namely, to the heavenly physician, Jesus Christ, must all come in the obedience of faith, renouncing every creature, and rising above all human laws, traditions, signs, or works, that the heart may rest only upon the merits of atoning blood, that its affections may be fixed in heaven. Otherwise no one can receive salvation, be made whole and saved. "For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." Ps. 72:12,13.

CHAPTER 11

The condition of unregenerate worldly men in its relation to this spiritual sickness and the balm of life.

What can we say concerning those careless worldly-minded men, who are destitute of the fear of God, who neither regard their own sickness, nor esteem the physician or the balm mercifully provided for our afflicted race? Their heart is possessed with desires for earthly honor, riches, pride and fleshly lusts; in these they have their heaven, and neither ask for any other inheritance, nor seek earnestly after God. Of these David speaks when he says: "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Notwithstanding their conscience and soul are penetrated by the most virulent poison and are utterly depraved, and are an offence and stink before God; they are not conscious of it, undervalue everything spiritual, are full of levity and think themselves whole, and that they are to abide in their present place forever. O, how cheerfully would they relinquish God and heaven, if they could but possess the world and abide in it in peace forever! all of which manifests itself in their anxious looks in a dying hour. But it will not fall out as ye wish, ye men of the world, for God is Lord not only of heaven, but also of the earth. "Behold, thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity—Selah." Ps. 39:5.

Such worldly-minded persons, who never earnestly seek after God, may be properly likened in their projects to a maniac who is very ill, but whose reason is dethroned and who shouts, sings, and laughs without intermission, just as if he were perfectly well and at liberty, and therefore is unwilling to receive advice from a physician, neither will he take any medicine, but tears open his wounds. We observe

a similar behaviour on the part of those ungodly persons who have cast off the fear of God. They are fettered and bound in sin and are full of evil, and if anyone out of love to their souls speaks to them about Christ, their spiritual sickness and the kingdom of God, they ridicule and mock, for they would rather perish than be made whole, aye, they might well say: "I will not accept this doctrine (that is, the Gospel of Jesus,) I do not wish to hear it, for I am only disturbed by it. I must take care of my children and see to my household, and therefore, have no leisure to attend to my soul, I will not do as God has commanded."

Behold, is not this an infallible sign that the soul is smitten with the fatal disease? Is it not palpable proof that the disease has made fearful ravages in their spiritual being? A man in affluent circumstances and in the enjoyment of full health, may select such articles of food, from an abundant market, as his taste may relish and as his experience may teach him is fitted to promote his comfort and strength. And thus also may those whose spiritual health has been restored, partake from a great variety of instruction such truths and promises, that are best fitted to impart moral strength; but this should be done with an enlightened judgment and in the fear of God, as St. Paul admonishes Christians, when he says: "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesying; prove all things, (that is, taste all things,) hold fast that which is good." In like manner does our Saviour direct: "He that hath ears, let him hear." "See what ye hear." And again he saith to his disciples: "Are ye also without understanding?" Matt. 15:16.

The individuals to whom we have referred, who shrink from the inquiry, and who shun the true knowledge of Jesus Christ and the healing doctrine of his Gospel, as though these would lead them into error and disturb their peace: these persons have never yet learned to know themselves and do not feel their wretchedness. They have never desired

to know the way of righteousness and the word of life; nor have they sought or considered the well-being of their souls. For that individual before whom is set a strange diet, which is known to be nutritive, if he turns from it untasted, because his stomach nauseates it, is certainly not in good health. The analogy holds good in spiritual things; for there are many in our day, who if anyone offers to their consideration the nature of this Divine balm, that is, speaks to them of repentance, and of the saving power of his grace and kingdom, they not only hear it with reluctance but reject it, and haughtily set aside whatever is disagreeable to the old Adam, whom they cherish.

Should you administer to such faithful warnings of coming retribution, as the penalty of sin, and of God's judgment, then they smart under the truth and oppose themselves to the doctrine, just as a child that unwillingly receives a disagreeable potion. Their carnal nature would prefer something milder and more pleasant and agreeable, for it desires no change, although at the close of an unholy life they would rise with all their pollution into the beautiful abode of the holy. O that their conscience might be awakened through God's word, to the importance of their salvation! O, that they might consider the instability of earthly possessions and the end of all things! that they might pray with Moses: "O Lord, teach us the measure of our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." Ps. 90:12. Then would they seek their spiritual health and appreciate their everlasting salvation!

CHAPTER 12

The World cannot endure a Manifestation, on the part of the Physician, of its Deadly Malady, much less will it be healed by Him.

It is to be lamented that the world will not endure a knowledge of its condition, nor is it willing to accept of deliverance from its evils. The children of this world do not wish to hear anything of the great evil which has befallen them, and which is described by the prophet Isaiah, as under the direction of God he pictures the affliction of all mankind by the miseries of the Jewish people: "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, for ever and for ever. This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of God. Which say to seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get thee out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Isa. 30:8-11.

As if they had said: It is not our pleasure that you should preach so much of the want of spiritual peace in us, and the presence of this plague and sickness in our souls; permit this Divine physician to remain in heaven, and let him dispense His bitter medicines elsewhere; the crucified Redeemer is not for us, and his bitter wine or drink is too strong for us. After this manner does the world surely still speak in its heart; it will not permit the physician Jesus to enter into its internal consciousness, that He might reveal its hidden corruption. This would alarm the worldling, but he does not wish to behold his disease in its fearful reality and therefore avoids the presence of the physician, and rejects the advice which He so freely proffers, and all simply because he has no desire for salvation.

It is moreover true that those languishing under bodily disease do not relish medicine, but rather dislike that which is prescribed. But when the danger is imminent, and his life is in peril, the fear of death will cause him to overcome his dislike for medicine; yea, some will suffer their limb to be amputated, that the whole body may not perish. Thus it is necessary that one should submit to the treatment of the physician if he would recover his health; for a skillful man will not administer more than the nature of the disease demands or the patient can bear. We should observe the same conditions with reference to the spiritual physician and His medicine. As the greatest possible evil to body and soul, namely, the pains of the second death, will assuredly befall those who are not delivered from their sins, no remedy that will secure everlasting health should be esteemed too unpalatable. The afflicted soul should moreover cheerfully submit itself to the physician, for He will not impose any requirements which His grace and assistance will not enable him to endure. "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13.

In regard to this does our Saviour himself give direction for our spiritual health, when He says in the Gospel: "Woe unto the world, because of offences! Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." Matt. 18:8. But the world is so perverted, that men will not only not acknowledge any offence, or sickness, or sin, but they also ridicule and reject the healthful teaching concerning the Saviour's Balm, and will not allow anyone to help them.

In reference to this does Paul prophesy, as he writes to Timothy: "For the time will come when they will not

endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. 4:3,4. This applies with sufficient clearness to all those who, having heard about their spiritual sickness, are unwilling to turn to the Divine Physician, that they might through Him be thoroughly healed. On the other hand, there are not wanting quacks who set up for physicians, who promise abundant health, but who never properly understand nor lay hold of the disease, and who never bring health; but who, through their spurious nostrums, make the sick worse and induce death; thus filling the church-yard, the grave, and (unless God in mercy interposes) hell with their patients.

This state of things seems to be acceptable to the world, as the Holy One of Israel, that is, Jesus, says in Isaiah of the ungodly of all times and places: "Wherefore, thus saith the Holy One of Israel, because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon; therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly, at an instant. And he shall break it as a potter's vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare; so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." Isa. 30:12-14. And farther, this is done by unskillful physicians—"who call good evil, and evil good; that put darkness for light and light for darkness." Isa. 5:20. And this is unquestionably also what Paul meant, when he writes of the punishment of the impenitent and morally diseased: "For when they shall say, peace and safety, then suddenly destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." 1 Thes. 5:3. This anguish and overthrow of the wicked, is graphically portrayed in the destruction of Jerusalem, and those terrific

disasters that burst upon that city are symbolic of those dark calamities that shall overwhelm and consume an impenitent world in that day when Jesus shall judge the world.

It was, therefore, not without cause that Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and in her name over the entire world, as it slumbers in its security and will not become sensible of its sins and plagues that threaten its ruin. How touchingly does our Lord deplore that insensibility that made them unwilling to receive him as their only Saviour! "O, that thou hadst known, ever thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." The approaching evil that hangs over our guilty world, as the impending ruin of the Jews, will yet bathe the world in the fires of God's wrath, as the prelude to the second death, into which the incorrigible sinners will be cast with the devil and his angels. O, lay it to heart, ye children of men, how precious the privilege to serve the Lord and to praise his name!

Thus also does the Spirit of God conclude through the prophet in this consolatory strain: "Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." When ye were quiet, help came—that is, when ye did not cry for help to others, but quietly yielded your souls into the hands of this gracious physician, ye were healed. O, what noble and consoling promises are these to us poor sinners! There is nothing required of the miserable and afflicted to be made whole but that they should become conscious of their sickness and desire to be healed, then coming to Jesus in humble faith and quietly resting on his promises he will find deliverance and salvation.

Hear again what the Spirit says through the apostle: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the

goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" "And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto thee, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy on thee, for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him. He will be very gracious unto thee at the cry of thy voice; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isa. 30:18-21.

These quotations from the evangelical prophet, as Isaiah may be truly called, I have presented for our comfort and instruction. They exhibit in a very striking manner our inherited misery on the one hand, and the love and mercy of our heavenly Father on the other. That all this applies to our Lord Jesus and his heavenly balm, is manifest from the subsequent part of this chapter, in which Isaiah speaks of the worth, the manifestations of this physician, and describes his government and kingdom and his office. "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days." That is, there shall be great joy, a light clear and brilliant shall arise in the hearts of believers at that time when the Lord shall bind the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound. That is the fullness of time when Christ was made flesh, suffered, died and rose from the dead and ascended up on high, leading captivity captive; that He might be exalted as a prince and Saviour, and become the physician whose healing power should restore the health of all nations. This will be the earth's jubilee, when peace and joy shall illumine the world.

This is already partially fulfilled in the appearance of Jesus, in the revelations of His Gospel and the setting up of His kingdom in our world; and is fulfilled in all those who in faith embrace Jesus as their Saviour. His kingdom is now advancing with power, and its glory gleams through the earth, and, as He goes forth on His mission of healing joy follows His footsteps, and this joy will enlarge as his work extends, until the day of judgment, when our afflicted humanity shall be recovered, healed and redeemed, shall rejoice with everlasting joy in the completeness of its redemption through the Messiah. The Lord commandeth his blessing, even life for evermore.

CHAPTER 13

The manner in which we may form a correct knowledge of this Soul-Sickness, and the means by which it may be healed.

The first and indispensable step to be taken by all persons, without distinction, who aspire to an heirship in the kingdom of God and to salvation through Jesus Christ, is to understand the nature of their spiritual sickness. A knowledge of the dreadful nature of this disease can be most effectually acquired by meditating on the awful sufferings of Christ. He stood in the place of the sinner, and all that He endured was necessary to heal the moral afflictions of man. Surely it could have been no ordinary evil that preyed upon the human soul when the infinite Jehovah gave up His only begotten Son as a sacrifice, so that the blood of the meek and innocent Saviour might become a balm to heal the afflicted. It was on account of our sins, that is, for our soul-sickness, and on account of the depravity of all men, that Jesus endured death, yea, even the death of the cross: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him smitten of God and afflicted." And the Son himself says: "I restored that which I had not taken away." Was the most beloved and holy child smitten and not spared, what then shall become of unregenerated and ungodly men? If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?

Wherefore if an individual finds himself insensible and cold, and cannot realize the greatness of his guilt nor see the extent of his misery, though he has narrowly surveyed his heart, his life, and his actions; let him earnestly contemplate a suffering Redeemer, and let him put the inquiry to his conscience, why did the exalted Son of God endure the bitter and ignominious death of the cross? And a voice from the Holy Word proclaims emphatically that our

sins and iniquities caused Him all his anguish. My sins, through which I was a child of wrath, occasioned His martyrdom and death, as He declared to the women that lamented His fate as He was going to Calvary: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves and your children. For if they do this in the green tree, what shall become of the dry?" As if he would say, if I, a flourishing and fruit-bearing tree by the water brooks, (Ps. 1:3,) endure this suffering you should learn the dreadful end that awaits the dry and corrupt trees; namely, all incorrigible and impenitent sinners.

An individual should first consider, in connection with the sufferings of Christ, that all who do not become partakers of the merits of Christ by repentance towards God and faith in Jesus, are exposed to the wrath of God which the Redeemer endured. For he who has not yet attained to a proper self-knowledge, and the design of Christ's death, can derive no advantage from His atonement. But when he feels his depravity, and realizes his lost condition, and heartily repents of his sins, and comes in humble faith to the compassionate physician of souls; then will he experience the unspeakable love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and rejoice in his recovered spiritual health. This is very touchingly and beautifully presented by the prophet when he says: "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." Then he says: "I, (that is, Jesus,) even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isa. 43:24,25. O, this is a precious assurance from the gracious promises of God, to us poor afflicted souls.

Although the just and eternal God might have left us in our fatal sickness to be finally condemned and lost, and His throne would have remained spotless; yet in the exercise of His great mercy, He had compassion on His fallen creatures, and out of love to us did not withhold His

Son, but gave Him even unto death, that He might restore to us the Divine favor. This love of God and of Christ, the sorrowful penitent must learn to embrace by faith. And as soon as he has become fully acquainted with his spiritual malady, he must hasten to the physician, and as he learned to feel his sins by meditating on the sufferings of Christ, so must he now lay all those sins again on Christ, as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. He must also strengthen his conscience by exercising faith in Jesus, and apply His blood as a balm to the wounds of his soul, and his salvation is secured.

CHAPTER 14

The Benefits and Fruits of the Suffering, Death and Resurrection of the Physician Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ did not only die for our sins, but he was also raised for our justification, that we might be made righteous through Him and become heirs of everlasting life. In His suffering, He took upon himself our sins and affliction, by His death He atoned for our sins, delivered us from guilt; but in His resurrection (by which he became our righteousness) He shows us how we, by faith in His life, may secure health, life and salvation. As in our risen and glorified Redeemer there is no token of sickness or wounds, thus can He also make us, in a twinkling of an eye, in God's sight altogether whole; provided we accept Him as our Lord and physician and are engrafted in Him by faith. The afflicted soul must exercise itself in meditations on the death of Christ, and also consider His resurrection as a pledge of our righteousness through Him. We will thus behold more and more of the displays of divine love, and be established through the word of God, while through the teaching of the Holy Spirit we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus.

It was customary in the primitive church in the time of the fathers, to conduct pupils, or beginners in the Christian faith, directly to the cross, that they might there behold an image of their spiritual sickness, as it was reflected in the sufferings of Christ. It was intended that these beginners in the faith, should behold in the sufferings of the cross of the Master, an illustration of their sickness and health, while His life and spirit should become the model of their life of cross-bearing through this world into eternal life. By the sign of the cross they were at all times admonished to endure patiently the trials of earth. The sufferings of the Redeemer were the daily study of primitive Christians, for those sufferings are a great mystery, under

which there lies shrouded a great deal of instruction. And surely if the amazing scenes of crucifixion do not alarm the conscience, and awaken not the heart to holy purposes and a new life, then neither will Moses or the law awaken him to a sense of his condition.

The Almighty Father knows full well how obdurate the heart becomes when He withdraws from it; yea, even under the most favorable circumstances, the heart is cold and perverted, so that it would not turn to God its maker, much less would it perceive and appreciate the design of Christ's suffering. To overcome this natural stupidity of the human heart, a merciful Father sends misfortunes and sufferings, that these may bring him to reflection. For the same benevolent reason does God permit disappointments, sickness and crosses of various kinds to befall man, that he may through these trials be brought to a knowledge of his spiritual afflictions and turn to Jesus, the divine physician, and secure the salvation of his soul. That all these trials are sent in love, is evident from the fact that they are designed to secure his reconciliation with heaven, and if this is accomplished at the expense of all earthly good, it is still a great mercy. "For what shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul? Or what shall he give in exchange for this soul?" Finally, those who are not drawn to the Lord by the blessings He bestows, are sometimes chastened until they grow weary of earthly things and seek those which are at God's right hand.

In relation to this, we have a forcible example in Manasseh, king of Israel; who, while flourishing in might and power, and crowned with honor, would not think of God nor study his own heart; but distinguished himself above the mass of the wicked by his gross idolatries, his cruelties and crimes. But when God permitted him to fall into the hands of his enemies, and he was carried captive to Babylon, in his deep wretchedness, misery and fear, he confessed what his

prosperity, pride and licentiousness once caused him haughtily to reject. He acknowledged his sins, and lamented when he saw the disorders of his soul, he humbled himself before God and prayed for mercy, as we see in his prayer as recorded. And so God heard him, and brought him again to his kingdom at Jerusalem. Then, for the first time, did he understand that the Lord is God. 2 Chron. 33:13. As it is written often concerning Israel: "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer." Ps. 78:34, 35. And what is the parable of the prodigal son? Amid the comforts of home, in his father's house, he had no inclination to consider his spiritual sickness, he would not lay it to heart; but when he came to want, when hunger pressed and he realized his wretchedness, he smote upon his breast and said: "O, Father, I have sinned before heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," &c. Behold, God must also chasten us that He may prevent eternal ruin. It is written: "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." Such was the language of David, and the experience of all saints is like his.

CHAPTER 15

The sum of Salvation and the Spiritual Health of the Soul consists in a two-fold knowledge, viz: Of Christ the Physician, and Ourselves.

Let us now direct our meditations to the afflictions of the soul, and how we may seek with comfort our salvation: for in these two particulars there is comprehended the entire foundation of salvation,—first, that the sinner becomes thoroughly conscious of his sickness, that is, sin, and feels that he is a depraved and fallen being; and then to understand what he may and should become through Jesus as his spiritual physician. One of these without the other is worthless in God's sight; just as the fear of God without love to God, and, like faith without works, profiteth nothing, as we have already stated, and will hereafter more fully discuss. David illustrates the same truth when he says —"They that sow in tears (that is to nail the old and sinful man to the cross with Christ,) shall reap with joy," (a new and sound man.) "And those that go forth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return with joy, bearing their sheaves." That is, those who water the seed, which is God's word sown in their hearts, with tears of penitence shall come again to Christ rejoicing in the harvest of blessing which the renewed soul obtains.

He who has arrived at a knowledge of his internal disorder, and with penitential sorrow seeks deliverance and repents, is already partially illumined by the dawnings of divine grace. He has the beginning of the new birth in the longings of his heart after spiritual health: for by nature he could not have such a desire, for such inclinations are only produced by the Holy Spirit—so that his redemption draweth nigh, since those yearnings which grace has kindled are the harbingers of that work which God is about to perform on his soul. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that an

individual advance in self-knowledge as he makes progress in the knowledge of Christ: for unless he sees the extent of his disorder and his utter helplessness, he will not earnestly apply to the Saviour for help; and, as already mentioned, it is not enough that you know your affliction of soul, and that you bewail it with tears, but you must form a proper estimate of Christ as a physician, and learn to know the grace and mercy of God in Christ Jesus, that you may render suitable offerings of gratitude and praise for the healing of your soul, when, as it is termed, you receive, Luke 1:77, "the knowledge of salvation through the remission of sin." For the knowledge of this salvation, John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way, and it is immediately after explained by Zacharias, as consisting in the forgiveness of sin, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us.

This experience is also described in the Holy Scriptures as the knowledge of God; and where such a knowledge does not exist it cannot be well with the soul. The vanity of such persons without the knowledge of God, is portrayed in the Wisdom of Sol. 13:10-19. The Lord saith in Hosea 6:6—"I have pleasure in love and not in sacrifice; and in the knowledge of God and not in burnt offering." Those who willfully remain ignorant concerning these things, let them remain ignorant. As Paul says—God will not know or acknowledge such in the day of judgment. And again, 1 Cor. 14:20—"Beloved brethren, be not children in knowledge, but children as to that which is evil; but in knowledge be ye perfect." Concerning the Pharisees, Jesus says they are blind leaders of the blind, while they never understood properly either themselves, the Redeemer, nor God, his Father in heaven.

CHAPTER 16

The Lord Jesus heals all Sicknesses, only one excepted.

At this stage of our meditations it is perhaps fitting to dwell somewhat on the different aspects of this sickness, or the different kinds of sin, but the various symptoms of the disease, or the different developments of sin, are best known to the Lord Jesus, who is fully acquainted with all the evils that rage with destructive power in human nature. But this I know, blessed be God, that no sin or transgression or injury of the soul is beyond His cure, with the exception of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and which consists in blasphemy and the rejection of the Lord Jesus. Those who do not receive him as the only begotten Son of God, and believe not that He in and through the Holy Ghost forgives sin, that He is the true Messiah, Redeemer and Saviour, are guilty of this sin. If anyone has once been enlightened and believed in Him as the restorer of man, but afterwards denies Him and repudiates the Gospel—ascribes the works of Christ through the Holy Spirit to Satan, and calls the Holy Ghost a devil, as the Scribes and Pharisees, through hatred and a wicked mind did when they ascribed His miracles to the agency of Beelzebub; such an one has voluntarily placed himself in a condition in which there is no mercy for his soul in this world nor in that which is to come.

We have therefore presented to our view the amiable and glorified Physician of sin-sick souls endowed with healing abilities that enable Him to cure all the spiritual maladies that are found in our disordered nature. He has made satisfaction to the law, and has become a propitiation no only for original, but also for actual sin; yea, He has atoned not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world. It should be further observed that Jesus does not, like other physicians, only heal some diseases, or offer remedies that death will defy in the end, but His healing powers invariably

secure the health of those upon whom they are exerted, and are never overcome by death, but secure to the patients everlasting life. Aye, so effectual is His grace, that all the wounds, bruises and putrefying sores once on the soul are removed, not leaving even a scar or wrinkle, but clothing the spirit in immortal youth and beauty, that it may become an heir of God and a companion of angels. It is a source of joy that the reigning King of glory still exercises His office and the skill of His heavenly kingdom under the economy of grace, in applying His healing balm to those that are sick. His remedies are offered without money and without price, and the only conditions that He makes are proposed by the prophet Isa. 55:1,2, and by the psalmist in Ps. 95:6,7. And no poor afflicted sinner may excuse himself as though it were the Physician's fault if he is not made whole.

In our day we are so highly favored, that much more abundant provision is made for the spiritually sick, than were known to those who lived centuries ago. The Lord Jesus also graciously manifests himself, and shows to a lost world that with Him alone can be found spiritual health. Therefore should no afflicted one delay, but today, while it is the accepted time and day of salvation, should he hasten, yea, run to Jesus, and seek him while He may be found. It is Jesus, the physician of the soul, whom we must seek in love and in the exercise of faith; and we should never resort elsewhere for remedies to heal the disorders of the heart. Not as the Jews whom the Lord rebukes in Hos. 5:13: "When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb; yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound." "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." In connection with this should we also with Jeremiah pray: "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for thou art my praise."

It was stated in a former part of this treatise, how He has sent out His credentials, and has posted and circulated His letters in which help is promised to everybody. The asylum has been opened; its gates are wide open to receive all the sick. In it are stored all manner of remedies, for His balm heals all kinds of sicknesses to which poor souls are subject. Only come, ye wretched, perishing ones, and receive Him in faith, and suffer Him to apply His healing power to your souls. O, turn to Him, afflicted souls, trust His balm for your salvation. He stands waiting to be gracious. He is accessible at all times, by day and by night, and His medicine is never diminished; it is sufficient to heal the whole world, and all who use it as He directs, will find it efficacious in the restoration of health and in securing for all everlasting life.

CHAPTER 17
The Three Sick Persons

One of three methods is usually adopted by persons who are sick. Some, as soon as they become conscious of their sickness, apply to the best physician and place themselves under his treatment. Others postpone their application, and wait to see whether the disease will not pass off without a resort to medicine, until they are laid upon a bed of affliction, when they call in the physician, give a description of their disease and ask for advice and help. The last class is made up of those who, although dangerously sick and confined to their couch, do not send for the physician; and if he would even come or be brought into the chamber of the sick by some sympathizing friend, the afflicted would reject his proffered services. And although the man of skill may see the danger and warn him of the consequences, yet will he persist in his rejection of the means that would save his life, and perish because of his obstinacy.

It happens very similarly with the spiritually sick. There are those who, as soon as they discern their spiritual sickness, seek after the Lord Jesus, the Physician of souls; or if they have been surprised by a temptation, they hasten to the feet of mercy, and there, denouncing their wickedness and confessing their faults, beg for the forgiveness of their sins. They would not allow sin to tarry all night in their hearts. They do not suffer their spiritual sickness to gain the ascendancy; they judge themselves, so that they escape the judgment of God; that is, they acknowledge their transgressions early and with deep regret before the Restorer of their souls, and therefore, like David, they find that there is mercy with God, that he may be feared. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this

shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely, in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto thee." Ps. 32:5,6. Such praise the Lord continually for His goodness and His precious balm, because He forgiveth all their sins and healeth all their diseases. Ps. 103:3.

There are others who, while they are pleased to hear of the infinite skill and boundless compassion of the great Physician, Jesus, neither are offended when their spiritual disease is unveiled, yet do they delay their coming to the true source of help; they intend to repent and enter upon a holy life, but they have not yet made a beginning. They procrastinate, supposing there is time enough to attend to these things. But the Lord delighteth not in the death of sinners, and therefore permits great calamities to befall them, and visits them with such afflictions as are fitted to bring them to a decision upon the subject of their salvation. Like the prodigal and King Manasseh whom we have mentioned, they are driven by the scourge of God's providence to Him to whom they would not be drawn by cords of love. Then they cry out: "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak: O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed, but thou, O Lord, how long! Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercies' sake."

Those procrastinators, who defer their repentance and their return to the Lord, are warned of the evil consequences that may flow from such a course: "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." Ps. 32:9. In regard to those who are in this frame of mind the Saviour speaks in the parable of the great supper, when He says: "Compel them to come in, that my house may be full."

The third class of whom mention has already been made, are fatally sick, full of sin and iniquity, but who neither fear the judgment of God, nor desire a knowledge of Christ, and will hear nothing about the disorders of their soul. These are the ungodly children of this world, who will not trouble themselves about the salvation of their souls. Every one of them does according to the imagination of his own wicked heart. Notwithstanding the kind physician, our Lord Jesus, offers himself to them, and permits the science of salvation and his healing art to be proclaimed in the Gospel, they reject it all, and mock and blaspheme, yea, even persecute the Lord and those who are his. They remain firm in their evil ways and will not allow themselves to be conducted to that which is good. Of such it is written: "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart that there is no fear of God before his eyes." Ps. 36:1. And while they despise the wholesome balm of life so kindly proffered and embrace lying vanities rather than the truth, they will retain their sickness and die the second death, and thus sink into perdition, where they must endure the pains of damnation before the presence of the Lord; as it is written, Isaiah 66:24: "Their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched, and they are a horror to all flesh." Therefore should we earnestly, in the day of grace, seek after the Lord Jesus, the great physician, and suffer ourselves to be healed, that we may be delivered from all spiritual afflictions.

Here it is also well to consider the relations of some afflicted ones to the physician, or to what degree those have advanced towards health, who are not entirely restored. Although not entirely healed, they have discovered the plague of their hearts, and are seeking Jesus, waiting for Him, and learning to know him through His goodness, and patiently wait in love and hope for pardon and salvation. The desires of such are breathed in the following earnest aspirations of the psalmist: "I wait for the Lord, my soul

doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul doth wait for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, *more* than they that watch for the morning." Ps. 130:5,6. O, then "seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. 55:6,7.

Those who abide under the care of the Physician will finally become altogether whole and rejoice in the hope of glory. "They are as trees planted by the water brooks, whose leaf shall not wither and whose fruit shall not fail. And whatsoever they do shall prosper." Ps. 1:3. But there are thoughtless souls who depart from the treatment under which they have derived benefit—they disregard the rules of health which Jesus has prescribed; and their last state is worse than their first, unless they return to the Lord. Truly has Peter discerned their wretchedness when he writes —"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb. The dog is turned unto his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." 2 Peter 2:21,22.

The last class have no realizing sense of their need of the Divine Physician; they know not that they are sick; they are self-righteous and without sin, or they will help themselves, or seek relief in human devices, such as good works and the observance of ceremonies. Such were the Scribes and Pharisees, who would not come to the only true Physician Jesus, and behaved as though they did not require the interposition of His healing power. Therefore did our Lord utter the reproof in the Gospel—"The whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

CHAPTER 18

Of the Diseases in general which Christ, the great Physician, heals.

I will now speak of the ordinary evils of this spiritual sickness. Some teachers comprehend all the evils of this moral disease under a threefold form. First, the wounds which sin has inflicted upon the internal man, which are seen in a perverted will and depraved faculties, from which spring evil desires and thoughts. The second class of evils are manifest in the works into which the imaginations of the heart are embodied, and are the results of man's acquiescence in the clamors of his corruptions for indulgence. The third is the evil customs or habits which are established and by which the soul becomes immersed in sin, so that there is scarcely a ray of hope for his recovery. The pious Augustine regarded this state represented or imaged in those three dead persons whom Jesus awakened out of the sleep of death, viz: the little daughter, the youth, and Lazarus. In the first instance, he supposed that the little daughter of the ruler of the Synagogue (Matt. 9:25) imaged the healing of the inward sickness or the removal of sin from the heart. The raising of the youth, who was already carried to the gate of the city, (Luke 7:12), was designed to represent the restoration to spiritual life from the outward disorders of this sickness, which are manifest in sinful works. And finally that Lazarus, who was already buried, but whom Christ called back to life, was intended as emblematic of the soul which has grown old in sinful habits, and become dead in trespasses and sin, but is awakened to spiritual life by the Lord of glory.

From all those evils which sin has inflicted upon the soul, will Jesus Christ deliver those who earnestly seek His help. To this end did the Father ordain Him the Physician of souls, that he might save not only from the sinful conditions

indicated above, but from all the miseries and guilt under which mankind are suffering. While we, however, obtain help and are restored to the divine favor, we are not at once perfectly healed, for so aggravated are the wounds which sin has made, that we have continually need of the application of the heavenly balm. And in view of the imperfections which cling to the Christian, we have reason to pray throughout our life-time: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." It is therefore manifest that while life endures we shall have our conflicts with sin, and hence we must always cherish our love for the Divine Physician, "who healeth all our diseases."

Christ is a physician of infinite skill, and imparts to His balm a specific power for every spiritual malady, and thus delivers not merely from original sin, but cleanses from all actual sins which those who believe in Him have ever committed. The followers of Jesus are not perfect; they have sins of infirmity, sins committed ignorantly, or when surprised by a powerful temptation; but "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses from all sin."

The life of God in the soul is not of rapid growth, it is a gradual work, and even after conversion, which is the birth of that higher life, comes the work of sanctification which is progressive, for it is written: "They go from strength to strength, until every one appears perfected in Zion before God." This gradual improvement in moral excellence enables us to see the extent of this deadly malady, and the difficulties that attend its entire cure, and we are therefore so much the more led to admire the faithfulness and love of the Healer and Saviour of our souls.

The experience of those who are whole, enables them to exercise patience with those who are still sick, for having once all the aversions to holiness that sinners feel, they know how to bear with them. He who has obtained spiritual health through the mercy of God, contemplates Christ as the

one altogether lovely, and not only submits himself to the healing power of the physician, but carefully observes all the rules prescribed to promote the well-being of the soul. He dies unto the world, crucifies his passions and resists sin; but he delights in the spiritual meat and drink provided for him, and the more he feeds upon the hidden manna and drinks from the fountain of life, the stronger and healthier he becomes. With Paul he can exclaim: "As for me to live is Christ, but to die is gain." With this realization of union with Christ, he shall, on the morning of the resurrection, rise perfected and complete in the Redeemer.

We should also remember that to those who are in Christ Jesus, that is, those who have passed under his tuition and who trust to His righteousness, God does not impute any sin. For the sake of Him who bore our iniquities, the Father will remember our sins no more forever, He will blot out our transgressions and cast our sins into the depths of the sea. That such is the gracious condition of those who have recognized in Jesus God's only Son, and received Him as the Divine Physician, who walk not in the flesh, but in the spirit, is evident from numerous declarations in the Holy Word: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." This is God's covenant which He makes with his people, it was established through the death of Jesus and was sealed by His blood. For Christ through His offering takes at once the conscience, wounded and enfeebled by sin, before the Father, cleansed by His precious blood, and gives to the penitent believer a peaceful conscience, and fills him with peace and the joy of salvation. O Lord! increase our faith, that we may experience in our hearts that rich unspeakable blessing, that we may serve thee in the beauty of holiness with body and soul to all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER 19

The Heavenly Balm, with which the Physician Jesus heals, and by which the sick are made whole and are saved.

As we have now heard the testimony of the Holy Scriptures concerning Him who is the Divine Physician, and also respecting those whom He heals and the diseases of the soul, it is proper now to say something in regard to the nature of that balm which heals the afflicted. For just as it is with the Physician, the sick and the diseased, so must there also be an appropriateness in the medicine designed to restore spiritual health. As the Physician is divine, thus also the healing which He produces, through the office of the Holy Spirit, is after a spiritual manner, and has reference to the corrupt spirit of man, and includes the restoration of the soul. It is, therefore, highly important that the antidote should be of such a character as powerfully to affect the sin-sick soul, that it may mollify and heal the wounded heart and take away the disease, while it begets a new life and substitutes everlasting health for disease and death. This powerful balm is nothing less than the living Word of God—the Word that was made flesh, through which all things were created, are preserved and governed, and through which, after Adam's fall, we were restored, born again, and had our sins forgiven. As David says—"He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." Ps. 107:20. It is, therefore, clearly established that the eternal Word, Jesus Christ, as well as His flesh and blood in the Word, is the true balm with which God helps and heals the bodies and souls of men. This fact was also demonstrated by Jesus in the days of His flesh, as He, through the word, awakened the dead, cast out devils, forgave sins, and healed all manner of diseases. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud,

that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void: but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. 55:10,11.

That which the snow and the rain accomplish for the parched earth, the word of God does for our race. As the earth is watered and nourished by the moisture descending from heaven, and is thus quickened that it produces fruits and is clothed with golden harvests, so does the word of God distil its quickening and refreshing influences on the parched fields of humanity, until there arise many new-born souls clothed in the beauty of holiness and laden with the precious fruits of righteousness. Therefore should the afflicted children of men pray earnestly and believingly that God's word may exert its quickening and renewing power upon their souls, that they may be made whole and be delivered from death. Then shall our hearts be purified and become temples of the Holy Ghost. As our Lord said unto His disciples—"Ye are pure through the words that I spake unto you."

We will here present the history of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, as an emblem of the antidote which we have under discussion, and also with a view to obtain clearer conceptions of the nature of spiritual sickness. "And the people spake against God and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water: and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people; and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a

brazen serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Under this figure we behold the poisonous bite of that old serpent, the devil, through whom our nature was ruined, and which first inflicted its terrible fangs upon the souls of our first parents in Paradise. Satan, through the instrumentality of the serpent, made them disobedient, caused them to despise eternal life, and made them heirs of death. Sin, the poison first infused by the serpent, entered into the blood, and is transmitted from parent to child, so that all by nature have the seed of death in them, and can only be healed and delivered from its terrible effects by the Redeemer.

God designed to picture to Israel through the bite of the fiery serpent their innate poison and their fatal spiritual disease, that they might have a knowledge of the evils that are cherished in the human heart. At the same time did the Lord teach them by the lifting up of the brazen serpent, that the eternal Word, that should become manifest in the flesh, would thus be transfixed upon the cross and there endure the torture of the old serpent. But though the serpent wounded (as predicted) the seed of the woman, He bruised the head of the serpent. In virtue of the Redeemer's suffering, He was glorified and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, and has now become the only saving cure for the deadly diseases of sin. Blessed be God that all who now realize and see their spiritual sickness, as the Israelites felt the wounds of the serpents, and confess as they did, (we have sinned,) and embrace the word of God with a living faith, looking upon an uplifted Christ and accept Him as their Helper and Saviour, shall obtain life. He has left us the most gracious assurances that all who yield obedience to His

commandment shall have those wounds healed that were inflicted by the serpent—that is, shall experience the forgiveness of sin and obtain health and salvation.

That we are to put this interpretation upon this Scripture narrative, is further evident from the book styled the Wisdom of Solomon. There it is also recorded that those who turned themselves to this sign were healed. Not, indeed, through that symbol, but through Him whom it was intended to represent as the propitiation for sin. "They are not healed either by herb or salve, but thy word, O Lord, is that which healed them." Wisdom 16:7-12.

Thus does the Scripture teach us that God and his word are our Physician and balm. From this it incontrovertibly follows that Christ is God, as His word is undoubtedly the healing power, since it corrects all the moral evils to which men are liable. It is therefore called the word of salvation. This corresponds with what has heretofore been observed concerning this heavenly medicine. "He sent his word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions."

CHAPTER 20

How the Word is Jesus Christ himself, and the manner in which his flesh and blood in the Word exert a healing power upon the soul and restore the afflicted.

That antidote which is offered freely by the Saviour to all who desire the restoration of their spiritual health, is at the same time pleasant as well as healing in its properties. It soothes the anguished spirit and refreshes the weary and wounded soul. It is, as heretofore mentioned, in its origin the eternal Word of God, in which we obtain the forgiveness of sin, health for the soul, and everlasting life. In the fullness of time that Word was made flesh; and this is, in a word, nothing else but Jesus Christ, the Son of the everlasting Father, through whom the Father originally made man, and after his transgression he was smitten by sin with a deadly malady, redeemed His fallen creatures through the Son. It is Jesus who forgives sin and saves the offender from a second death, and makes him whole and happy. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men."

When the Redeemer was lifted upon the cross He fulfilled the design of the figure of the brazen serpent, for as the crucified Saviour he holds the same relation to us that the serpent did to the Israelites, viz: God's appointed means to restore the wounded. This explanation of that symbol is given by Jesus in His discourse as recorded in John 3:14,15. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." From this we may easily comprehend the meaning of the words which the Lord addressed to the Israelites. "He that is bitten and looks upon the serpent shall live." Almost all things in the old dispensation pointed to Jesus Christ, and were prophetic of the help and the blessings that would attend the mission

of Jesus into our world. The eternal Word having become flesh was crucified, and afterwards exalted to a throne at God's right hand, that He might be sought through faith as the effectual means of restoring the sinner to the divine favor and healing the soul of all its maladies. He is our health and our righteousness, and while He rules and reigns on high He works through the Holy Spirit, and heals through our spiritual knowledge of Him, which we obtain through the Spirit, and by the word of life delivers from death [and] hell. He takes away our sin and unrighteousness and gives us in return His grace and righteousness, and through His victory everlasting life. Isaiah prophecied concerning this when he exclaimed: "He shall swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces: and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." And in Hosea Jesus speaks through His servant—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plague: O grave, I will be thy destruction." "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. 15:55.

All this has been accomplished through the death and suffering of Christ, and in the outpouring of His blood He had united His divine nature with flesh; and hence that spiritual balm which is for the healing of the soul, derives its efficacy from the death and cruel sufferings and from the shedding of the blood of God's beloved Son. It is of no avail that persons seek other means, for whatever antidotes they may devise to correct the disorders of the heart, they can never restore the health or purity of the soul. The merits of the Redeemer's death constitute the only plea of the sinner before God, and His blood the only hope of the perishing. Jesus Christ, as true God and man, and one with the Father, is the Physician, and Himself became the medicine whereby we may have our afflicted souls healed. Though exalted on

His mediatorial throne, He is accessible by prayer: and faith may reach her unseen hand into the heavens, the storehouse of mercy, and bring such supplies of grace as we daily need to promote our spiritual comfort. Only let our prayer be importunate: that we may be sprinkled with His blood, that our wounds may be mollified with His grace, and we shall be thrilled with the rapturous pulsations of a new and higher life. Christ, I would once more speak it to His praise, is an all-sufficient Physician and is Himself the Balm of life: as He is the High Priest and the offering, the one who makes righteous and is the righteousness, the Master of food and the food itself, the Tree of life and the fruit of it. Yea, all the good effects His balm produces are also in itself —for it is itself health, righteousness, power, peace, joy and everlasting salvation.

Jesus has not only procured this costly and precious medicine from God for us, but offers it to us Himself and dispenses it liberally through the Holy Ghost, together with all that is necessarily connected with it out of the heavenly treasury. It is through Christ and for His sake that we obtain counsel and help to everlasting life. He has prescribed the mode of treatment, and permits it to be preached and proclaimed in the Gospel amid the music of the sanctuary, while He sets before us the examples of those whom He has relieved, that He may incline many sin-sick souls to come unto Him for help. Here in the Gospel may the sick learn how to approach the Physician and how they may obtain His service. Yea, He comes before them and shows them the tokens of their sickness, and offers His help while they may yet be saved. He even enters the homes of the afflicted, and so manifests His ruling power in all their affairs, that they may become conscious of His presence and implore His mercy, and thus be made heirs of the kingdom of grace. It was necessary to urge this again, though repetition is not so pleasant, because there are always those who would

obscure the way of life and who do not conduct their neighbor directly to Christ, but through by-paths, through human devices and ceremonies through which the soul only becomes worse. Blessed be God, the poor sinner may come to Jesus, the Physician of afflicted souls, without the intervention of man, and may tell Him his wants, and draw from the exhaustless fountain the waters of life freely. As it is written—"From his fullness have we all received, and grace for grace." John 1:16.

It is not, therefore, with the spiritual Physician, Christ, and His balm, as it is with other bodily physicians, who strive to restore their patients by external applications or with medicinal plants, and give their skill for pecuniary considerations. Jesus is very different, having no selfish motives: He acts in the presence of Almighty God, and ministers as our faithful High Priest and Mediator without intermission even to-day, that He may heal our diseases—that we may realize our misery and appreciate His healing provision. He is more faithful in doing good to the most needy than all others; there is indeed no comparison between the skill, the assiduity and gentleness of this Divine Physician, and those of our fellow men who are devoted to the healing art. His goodness and power, as well as the freeness of His offices, transcend our conceptions. He invites all—is ready to bless all. "Whosoever is athirst, let him come, and whosoever will, let him partake of the waters of life freely." Rev. 22:17. For He does not heal after the manner of men, but through His word, His spirit and His life, He renews the youth of the soul, restores harmony in the heart, and reconciles us to heaven. And having removed the disorders of our spiritual nature, He makes us heirs of everlasting life.

It is to be observed here also that Jesus heals by the exercise of His own power, as it is declared in the Gospel —"And all the people desired to touch him; for a virtue

proceeded from him and healed them." Even to this day there emanates such a power from Him that He daily heals the spiritual infirmities of those who come in contact with Him. He removes the sins of all those who touch Him or fix their hopes upon Him by faith. Though faith should be feeble, only let it be sincere and lively, and if it can impart ever so small a blessing from Christ, it will soon strengthen, until the healthful influences of grace will form the soul anew and clothe it in the beauty of holiness. Such are the blessings promised by the prophet. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isa. 40:29,31.

It is through the precious flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus that we are healed, for out of these there springs a fountain of health, whose streams impart strength, righteousness and joy. For God has made the flesh and blood of Christ in His word, the balm, that is to heal our humanity by connecting it with the Divine nature, and thus renew man by its living power. He heals with the wine and oil of joy of the Spirit and the truth: with these He bathes and dries our wounds, and delivers the conscience from the bondage of spiritual death, and comforts and cheers our fearful hearts. In a word, as Christ carries in the power of His word everything, so also does it contain all manner of balsam for the injuries of the soul. He conveys through His word everything that is serviceable to our souls, yea, imparts through it all that is needful and profitable to our restoration and the healing of our diseased nature.

In the word is contained that pure water, the water of life, with which He cleanses the sores of those afflicted by sin—sprinkles and purifies them. In the word He carries the salt that is necessary to the offering up of the old man, that

it may consume the foul flesh and cleanse the wounds. In that same word are found the oil of joy and that heavenly salve, which are necessary to the healing of a wounded spirit. In that word there is also that consuming fire, which is intended to burn all the dross of sin and kindle in the heart the love of God. Thus does Jesus Christ carry in His word food and drink, viz: His body and blood, with which He may regale the heart of the afflicted and quicken the poor fainting soul, while with this same provision He nourishes those who have been made whole, and causes them to advance in the new life and flourish as trees of righteousness.

Our heavenly Physician alone has spiritual treasure; He is the sole possessor of that efficacious power which is required in the healing of souls. It is by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3) that He raises the dead sinner to everlasting life, and preserves him pure and holy forever. And whatever of weakness and imperfection may remain in the flesh of the Christian will be destroyed by death, and he shall come forth in the resurrection with a body fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus, without spot or blemish, and arrayed in the beautiful robes of a sinless immortality. If anyone desires to examine this subject more fully and learn the difference between the afflicted and the whole, the sinner and the saint, the old and the new man, and contrast the wounds and deformities of the one with the grace and glory of the other, let him diligently read the graphic portrait drawn by Ezekiel in the sixteenth chapter. For the Spirit of God presents the two characters in striking contrast in that chapter under the image of Jerusalem. As all those spiritual blessings necessary to the restoration of the soul, to its health, joy and comfort, are only to be found in our Lord Jesus, we dare not seek them elsewhere or in any other object. We must repair to the well of salvation and with a cheerful faith draw from it the waters of life. Christ is

that fountain—come unto Him, ye thirsty, fainting souls, and live!

That the efficacy of the Saviour's balm is not entirely dependent upon His Divine nature, but consists rather in the union of the Divine and human, is evident from the fact that He performed His miracles not only by the utterance of a word, but also by the use of the members of His body. He took the ruler's daughter by the hand, as He uttered the command for her to arise. He anointed with His fingers the eyes of the blind man, while he looked up to heaven and said, Be ye opened. This is designed to show that both His Divine and human nature are active in the healing of souls. For as hearing, sight and life attended His touch, so now is that union of the two natures in Christ, the secret of that renewing and saving power which issues from the God-man upon a perishing world, and through which our afflicted humanity will be quickened with a new life. The Redeemer could unquestionably have wrought those splendid miracles by speaking a word, as He did with the centurion's child; but His whole life, and all the particulars of His actions, were freighted with instruction. In the exertion of His two-fold nature when He wrought miracles, He illustrated the mystery of His incarnation, and indicated the prospective dignity and glory to which humanity should be exalted in heaven through the Divine nature with which He formed an indissoluble connection. He thus became emphatically the balm, to heal and to restore to its original, sinless glory, the soul that was created in the image of God.

Finally, it may be expedient to remark, lest anyone should fall into error, that the Divine remedy for the evils of sin, though presented under a variety of names, when its exhaustless resources and its Divine efficacy are spoken of, (as already indicated,) yet is there, after all, a oneness in that remedy. Jesus Christ, with His Spirit and grace, constitute the means of deliverance from all the evils of sin;

these contain the power to cleanse from the pollutions of all iniquity. Precious Physician of souls! Glorious deliverer of sinners, exert thy healing and saving power, that our weary, wounded and afflicted race may experience the power of thy grace and be saved from death and hell!

CHAPTER 21

Why Christ is called the Heavenly Physician—What we are to hold and believe concerning Him—What constitutes a profession of true Christian Faith.

Jesus Christ is called the heavenly Physician, in the first place, because, his name is Jesus, which means, Saviour, Redeemer, Deliverer, as it is written in the Gospel: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for he shall save His people from their sins." That is, deliver them from soul-sickness. In like manner does Peter speak to the Jews on the day of Pentecost: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sin." Acts 5:30,31. Now mark what is meant by a Saviour, when and how he became Saviour; and you will readily understand the office of our heavenly Physician with the afflicted; even as from repentance and forgiveness of sin, we may understand the sickness and the balm for its healing.

But our Physician is not only called Jesus, but also Christ, which means the anointed one, on account of the glory of His humanity by the Divine anointing. He has, as God's anointed, become ours in God according to the flesh, as Peter remarks: "Therefore let the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:36. As if he had said, this man whom ye esteemed so lightly and crucified, Him hath God glorified and made Him equal in substance, in power, in honor and glory with Himself. He baptized Him externally and internally with the Divine balm and balsam; yea, with the oil of joy of the Holy Ghost He filled Him and penetrated His whole being with the anointing, so that the head is not only consecrated by it, but it flows from His head down upon His garments, that is, upon all His members, and

from Him it issues in streams for the consecration of Christian, believing hearts. And now Jesus Christ, anointed by the Holy Ghost, is the salve, the good savor, the pleasant balm Himself, so that all other persons may not only be healed of many deadly maladies, but that they may also be anointed, sanctified and beautified, renewed and purified by Him, and thus become a sweet savor unto God, be made partakers of the Divine nature, and of the riches of the kingdom of heaven. Thus is Jesus Christ made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. 1 Cor. 1:30. Yea, truly He is become our healing balm, the oil of joy and our anointing, a poured out oil, is the sweet and lovely name of Jesus. Through the word should the name, the being, the power, and the ability of Him be understood, and we should not strive after the outward word or name simply, but in faith draw near to Him who is represented by these names and symbols.

The apostle Paul was chosen and commissioned as the servant of Jesus the Divine Physician, that he might make known to the whole world the Divine power, honor and glory of Jesus Christ, as these were associated with His human nature, so that he became the healing balm for an afflicted race. This is intimated by our Lord himself in His address to Ananias: "Go thy way for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Acts 9:15. For there is salvation in none other, neither is there any other name given among men through which we can be healed or saved. His name, says the Bride of this heavenly Physician, is like incense poured out, therefore, do the young maidens, that is, Christian souls, love Him. The anointing of Christ through the Holy Ghost has made His name fragrant to believing souls, for that name is associated with all their spiritual enjoyments, with all those manifestations that fill them with a holy rapture. The afflicted, on account of the Physician and

heavenly balm, are called Christians, as soon as He imparts spiritual health and becomes their portion through the Holy Spirit. The sweet fragrance of His grace exceeds the sweetness of all the spices of earth. Cant. 4:10. "Yea, His clothes smell of costly myrrh, aloes and cassia." Ps. 45:8. There issues from Him into all fainting and believing souls a sweet savor, that is, His word and grace. The word of salvation and life, the Gospel of peace, which is pleasant to all afflicted Christians, and brings, yea, more and more enduring health to the soul.

This then is the true Christian faith, viz: to believe on and to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, the Son of God, through which faith alone we obtain life, that is, health and salvation in His name. For it was ordained from all eternity, that this Jesus should be conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and for the consolation and salvation of all men should be crowned of God in virtue of His sufferings and death with honor and praise as the first-born from death and a prince of everlasting life. He should be exalted of God, and have given to Him a name that is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father. All this might be understood and believed concerning the man Jesus of Nazareth as to His human nature, according to which nature Christ, as the Scriptures testify, was to present the new mystery of godliness in this united form of the human and divine, and be the acknowledged Son of God. Thus He prayed previous to His suffering, that the Father should glorify Him in His humanity with that glory which He had with God before the world was. Now this was for the consolation of all mankind richly fulfilled in the humanity of Christ, by the resurrection of the man Christ Jesus, His ascension to heaven, and His being seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. He is thus

equal with God the Father, in power, might and honor, and is heir of all things in heaven and on earth, which He did not require to be made after His Divine nature, because He was always co-equal with the Father, and was like Him in His existence and eternity. According to His human nature did all these things happen, in which He was exalted to the right hand of God as Lord and Christ, and is made the head of His church, our physician and our balm of life.

Therefore, I observed that this heavenly physician is not only called Jesus, but in consequence also through the anointing of the oil of the Holy Ghost is become the Christ, that we may not separate the eternity of the two natures in Christ, or sever the humanity from the Divinity. We should, therefore, properly consider Jesus Christ in His entire person as a Divine unity and being, and with all angels honor and worship Him. This is the more important, that we may obtain the balm, health, and other heavenly gifts not as from a half or divided, but from a whole Christ, true God and true man. Aye, in this Christ we should not only seek the heavenly balm, but the God-head and humanity in their completeness; on account of which and through which God only can be gracious and forgive us our sins, and enrich us with His spirit and the riches and glory of His kingdom. O, what a treasure have we in Jesus! Behold how His glorification exalts our race! Adorable Lamb of God, take away our sins and fill the world with Thy life and Thy glory!

CHAPTER 22

The Splendor and Glory of the Attributes and Being of our Heavenly Physician, Jesus Christ.

All the Scriptures, but especially the Psalms, testify of the sufferings and death and afterwards of the exaltation, the kingdom and glory of our heavenly Physician, Jesus Christ. In the 45th Psalm David speaks of Him in exalted terms as the King of glory, yea, as God clothed with Divine lustre and splendor. Among other attributes he enumerates the following—"Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Behold, the prophet calls Him God, and shows in the spirit of prophecy how God the Father has anointed Him without measure with the oil of joy—that is, has invested Him with the fullness of the Godhead. Such is the anointing and the oil, on account of which He is called Christ, or the Anointed of God.

As oil is possessed of three useful properties,—it gives light, it nourishes and heals,—so also does the anointed King, Jesus Christ, enlighten, heal and nourish. He is the sun and light of the world: without His light all mankind would walk in darkness. In the prophecy of Malachi it is written —"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Mal. 4:2. The light of this Sun brings with it the dawn of that rapturous day of glory that shall endure forever, for He is the Sun of eternal day, and it shall never more set. He is the bread upon which the children of God are nourished, without which aliment all hungry souls would famish. This is beautifully presented in his discourse as recorded in the sixth chapter of John. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. I am that bread of life whereof if a man eat he shall never die. Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye shall die. It is equally true that He only can heal our

spiritual diseases, and without His balm our soul-sickness would be unto everlasting death.

I have thus endeavored to show the exaltation, the power, might and glory of Jesus Christ and His holy humanity, so that afflicted sinners might form suitable conceptions of their Physician and Saviour, and properly esteem and honor His antidotes for the evils and corruptions of our nature; that is, His holy flesh and blood, through which we are healed and nourished with immortal life. Those who properly consider the heavenly and Divine nature of Jesus, as it is unfolded in His humanity, and spiritually discern His flesh and blood, will find Him to be the meat and the drink of their souls, and therefore they reap the blessing promised to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Those who do not discern the Lord's body nor accept His doctrine of life and salvation in its primal simplicity, will find no relief for their sickness anywhere else. And while they rob Him of His honor as the truly begotten Son of God by denying His divinity and mission, they become their own destroyers; forasmuch as they do not recognize in His flesh and blood a healing balm for wounded souls, and do not regard Him as the bread of life, and are therefore never made partakers of the benefits of His suffering and death. Suffer me here to utter a word of warning to all those who expect to become Christians in any other way than by repentance towards God and faith in Jesus, or those who would ascend to heaven and inherit everlasting life upon the merits of anyone save the merits of Jesus. For He has truly said—"I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

CHAPTER 23

The Physician, Jesus Christ, is yet to-day true Man, but in the Being of God and in Divine Glory.

Although the flesh and blood of Christ, as also the Word (that is, the Divine nature,) constitute the spiritual medicine of poor afflicted souls, we should not understand it in such a sense, as though His flesh and blood (that is, His humanity,) did not exist even now. Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus Christ, after His humanity, has acquired Divine might and has inherited and received the heavenly mystery in the Divine unity, He is still a true man; yea, the man that was born of the Virgin Mary, and whose body was nailed upon the cross, but who is risen from the dead and has been made perfect. According to the testimony of God's word, Heb. 2:7,9; 5:5,7, He is declared the new heavenly Man, declared and made equal with God, and in whom all former and perishable weaknesses of our nature, through His resurrection, ascension to heaven and enthronement at God's right hand, were transformed into Divine power. "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God." 2 Cor. 13:4. From this may be clearly deduced the two-fold state of Christ, viz: the weak and the strong, the human and the Divine. The first ended with the man Christ; the second went gloriously forward, as He liveth in the power of God. Yea, the power of God is now His entire life, since Jesus Christ, according to His humanity, has all the ability or power which resided in Him as the eternal Word, when yet unclothed with humanity He dwelt with the Father. And now, as the only begotten Son, God and Man, He is enthroned with the Father and crowned with the highest Divine honor, as He is also invested with all the perfections of the Godhead.

When, therefore, the apostle speaks of the new being and life as manifested in the man Christ Jesus, we must not

suppose that He laid aside flesh and blood, but retained these in a perfect and glorified form, in the same manner as believers are made partakers of the Divine nature through Him hereafter, and yet do not lay aside their personal identity. Our heavenly Physician, Jesus Christ, lives henceforth not in the earthly or temporal life, but His existence goes forward in God—in the power of God, as Paul declares. Rom. 6:9,10; 2 Cor. 13:4. Everything that pertains to Him has become new, eternal and spiritual, otherwise He could not have become the food of our souls. Neither could He in any other form be our spiritual Balm and Life. In a word, in His entire being He lives the life that from everlasting pertained to God, and which the Word (that is, the son of God) had with the Father before the world was. If it were not so then would Christ be divided—that is, His humanity would exist in a distinct and separate form from His divinity; He would have a two-fold life, and spirit and being, which every believer will perceive would be wholly inconsistent.

Christ Jesus, I would once more affirm upon the testimony of the Scriptures, has two natures—He is God and man, indivisible; but these two natures exist in a Divine, eternal life and nature.

This human life and being, now after His glorification, ascension to heaven, yea, His exaltation above all the heavens, should be contemplated not in the light and after the manner of reason only, which, though a noble faculty, is not in itself sufficient for a proper apprehension of Christ, but it should be considered as the Divine existence or being with and in God, which can only be understood by faith, without which it is impossible to know Christ aright. The gift of the Holy Ghost, the righteousness of God and the health of the soul, and finally eternal life and salvation, can never be realized by us unless it commences in a correct spiritual apprehension of Christ, and is then carried forward even to

the throne at God's right hand, and connected with the humanity of Christ, who is the living Head and source of life. We are, therefore, not to regard our Divine Physician, Jesus Christ, together with the balm (His flesh and blood,) now, after the completion of the work of redemption, no more after their human aspect and form, but view them in a spiritual light and according to the existence in which He now reigns. This was foreshadowed in His own words when He said—"And I, when I shall be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. For it is because of His being first lifted upon the cross and afterwards exalted to glory that the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh, through whom also all those that believe in Christ shall be raised into the Divine, heavenly existence, and live for evermore.

According to the nature and state indicated must the Lord Jesus be known through faith, that we may know that the fullness of the Godhead dwelleth in Him and that God may be seen in the face of Jesus Christ, in whom He shines and in whom also are found all the treasures of heaven. The Father has also ordained that Divine grace and the riches of the kingdom of heaven should come through none other than this Man, who is the Mediator between God and man. As it is stated by Paul in 1 Tim. 2:5,6—"There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, namely, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." He is our Saviour, our Physician, our balm, our help, our all.

CHAPTER 24

How it was in regard to the Balm and the Physician of the Soul in the Old Testament, and before the Incarnation of Christ.

Since I have remarked that not only the Word of God (or the Divine nature,) but also the humanity of Christ—that is, Christ as entire God, with His sufferings, death and the shedding of blood—is the Physician and balm of our souls, the question might be propounded by some one, how was it concerning these things before Christ became man, or before the Word was made flesh? In reply to this we answer, that in relation to the means of salvation which were then prospective to man, they were present with God. The order of salvation was the same before the incarnation that it was afterwards; the same prior to the giving of the law that it was under the law. As those who lived under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations through faith beheld the promises afar off and believed to the saving of their souls, so do we also appropriate through faith the merits of the ascended and glorified Redeemer, for He is the Saviour of all the chosen, as well the Lord and King of all.

According to the testimony of the Scriptures, none can be made whole, that is, righteous, before God without Jesus; but as under the Old Testament dispensation there were many pious and righteous persons, yea, patriarchs and prophets, it must follow as a necessary consequence that Jesus Christ healed and saved them, forasmuch as they also were at one time sinners. And although at that period the Word was not yet made flesh—although Christ had not then suffered nor poured out His blood in death—yet all this was immediately after the fall of Adam and afterwards to Abraham given in a promise. It was announced, for the consolation of the first and all subsequent offenders, that the eternal Word should assume our nature and suffer for

our guilt: that He should bring back the wretched and lost, and heal the afflictions and the wounds of our fallen race.

Those who then embraced with a living faith the promises of God in Christ, concerning His sufferings and His saving power, received Jesus as their Physician and also His balm, upon the evidence of their faith, just as truly as those receive Him who now truly believe on His name. They received not only the word of God as a solace to their souls, but were also made partakers of the benefits of the sufferings and blood of Christ in the word of promise which they believed. That word was spirit and life to the healing and salvation of their souls, notwithstanding the word was not yet made flesh. Faith, which makes that which is future present, according to the eternal word of truth, brought the blessing home to the hearts of true believers, so that they enjoyed salvation as fully as though all things concerning the work of redemption had already transpired. In the merciful dispensation of God, the saints of old were saved just as we are, by faith in the blood of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. As they stood around the altar stained with the blood of the victim offered, they sang of Him who should come, and with the eye of faith, beheld the great sacrifice for sin that should be offered on Calvary.

We will endeavor to establish this by a number of passages from the Scriptures. First of all, let us hear what Paul says: "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." Heb. 13:8,9. Here the apostle clearly affirms that Christ is the same and only Saviour under the old testament as well as under the new. Those who lived before the law was given, like those under the law, and under the Gospel, could only hope for salvation through Christ. Peter declares in Acts 15:11, the ground of

our hope. "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they." It follows, therefore, that Christ with all His mercies, the shedding of his blood, His cross and suffering, was as much their Saviour as ours, and was their physician and balm, before His birth as man.

Again have we the same assurance from Jesus Christ, in His address to the Jews. "Your father Abraham desired to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." This day of the Lord, means His advent in the flesh, together with His crucifixion and glorification, all of which Abraham beheld with the eye of faith in the offering up of his son Isaac, as if His death and the benefits resulting from it were already accomplished, and thus was it also with all other true believers. Abraham believed God, when He had assured him that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And his faith was accounted to him for righteousness, and he was delivered from his spiritual sickness and made whole.

In the book of Revelation, we also find an important and clear proof of the correctness of the statement already made. "And the Lamb which was slain from the foundation of the world." Certainly not actually slain, but in the merciful design of God, for God has ordained that Jesus should suffer for our souls, that His blood might wash away our sins, and that He might be the healing balm of our souls; this was as real to their faith as though it had already been fulfilled. Therefore, John does not say that the Lamb should be slain, but that it was slain from the foundation of the world; that is, that all the elect of God from the beginning, were healed and saved through the efficacy of atoning blood.

Hence, although the man Christ Jesus was not yet manifested at that period, neither was His blood shed for the remission of sin, still did the faith of all true believers bring the promised Saviour to the relief of their spiritual wants.

The afflicted and dying sinner was immediately after the fall, again invited to return, and through grace restored and accepted. The Physician was promised and, notwithstanding a long time elapsed before He would become man and shed His blood for the forgiveness of sin, yet was it absolutely certain to believers as they had implicit confidence in the word of God. To make this still clearer, I remark that although Jesus Christ according to His divine nature was from the beginning the Physician and Saviour of all believers, thus also after His incarnation was He ordained of the Father to fulfil these offices, and was at the same time set apart as the King and Head of the Church. Eph. 1:18-22. After this manner He has been the everlasting righteousness and wisdom of God, and yet, also after the completion of the work of redemption became our wisdom and righteousness. 1 Cor. 1:30. Concerning this determination and will of God in regard to the incarnation, suffering and death, resurrection and glory of Christ, as well as our salvation through Him; all this have the prophets predicted through the help of the Holy Ghost. 1 Peter 1:10-12. And the beloved holy fathers of the Old Testament never doubted that it would transpire, and were, therefore, saved through Christ. Their faith clung to the promise of the Messiah, and they were conscious of those realizations of blessedness which now flow from the various offices of Christ, so that in reality He was the spiritual meat and drink, just as truly as He is to believers of the present day. True faith will readily comprehend to the saving of the soul that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever.

Christian faith embraces the heavenly Physician, Jesus and His balm, not only after His Divine nature, but also in reference to His human nature, even before he was born. The believer grasps in Christ, not only the Divine, but the human, aye, the word, that was to be made flesh, and now has become flesh. For that which God had at that time

promised concerning Christ as yet future, that was already present to their faith as though it had already occurred. If we earnestly pray to the Holy Spirit for the true faith, and that He would teach us to know Jesus spiritually, that we may not confine Him to place, limit, or office, but receive Him in His eternal being, we shall then conceive of Him as He is with God. Whatever Christ has personally accomplished for our redemption and salvation, this was also done in the spirit that Jesus Christ the King of grace might, through the Holy Ghost, even to this day, dispense the blessings of salvation to them that believe.

CHAPTER 25

A two-fold aspect of the Balm of Christ, with some notice of its power and efficacy, as displayed in afflicted man.

At this stage of our discussion it is proper to observe that this heavenly medicine which we are considering has a two-fold particular power and efficacy, (notwithstanding it remains one Divine substance,) just as the physician operates in a two-fold manner. The one mode or power is painful, with which the wounds of the old nature are disturbed, the disease of sin attacked, the moral sores are cleansed, and the suppurated flesh is destroyed and healed.

The other effect is pleasant, for it brings with it consolation and health and the soothing oil of joy, which always has a healing influence, strengthens the spirit, gives life to the soul, and while it removes the troubles of the heart, it transforms the sorrows of the mind into spiritual joy. These two-fold powers does our Physician, Jesus Christ, exercise, which He himself unfolds in the parable of the good Samaritan, who took oil and wine and poured into the wounds of the unfortunate stranger. These two modes of administering the balm, or its efficacy after this manner, disturbs the kingdom of sin, while it preserves him who is whole in his state and being; and should there be any fresh symptoms of the disease, he will at once come to the Physician, until the flesh with its lusts is totally subdued.

The first power of this balm is the word of the cross, and it is intended for the old Adam, whose sickness it must subdue and destroy by mortifying the evil desires and overthrowing his false refuge out of Christ. This is the strong, sour myrrh wine, the bitter syrup of the cross and sufferings of Jesus Christ the Son of God, which the poor afflicted soul must drink when it seeks the Physician and desires to be healed. It is through the power of this word that he must seek the destruction of sin and the old nature.

And though painful, let him abide under the cross of Christ, and so meditate upon the sufferings of God's Son that he may realize that he is chargeable with the death of the Redeemer—that his sins have inflicted upon the innocent Lamb of God pain and death—and he will crucify his sins and die unto the world. Let us remember, also, that all this must be experienced before we can be made whole or have everlasting life, as Paul writes in 2 Cor. 4:10,11—"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

Concerning the power of this balm in the word of the cross, we may again quote the words of the apostle as recorded in Heb. 4:12—"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." As it not unfrequently happens in a protracted case of sickness that the first doses of a powerful medicine only seem to increase the sickness, so that the individual feels as though he would die; thus also does our heavenly Physician administer such pungent remedies that the poison—that is, sin—that lies diffused through the entire man, is driven to the heart and conscience, and manifests itself to the mind in all its horrid evils. But after He has produced in the sinner this sense of wretchedness, He imparts restoratives—that is, the grace of salvation and the spirit of faith—with which this tender Physician purifies the afflicted heart and gives health to the soul.

As it would be unbecoming in one who labors under bodily disease to oppose the efforts to relieve him, so also would it be highly improper for a sin-sick soul either to resist, to doubt, or be alarmed, though he suffer anguish,

for the beginning of his restoration must be painful. The spiritually sick should submit themselves in all patience to such treatment as their Divine Physician may prescribe, and though He should carry them through a long and painful experience, they may rest assured that He will subject them to no unnecessary suffering, nor will He permit their pain to be more than the removal of their malady will require.

The blessings connected with the soul's recovery from this moral sickness are unspeakably great and inexpressibly glorious, and in view therefore of that cloudless felicity which believers shall inherit, they should be willing to undergo any temporal calamity. "Our light afflictions are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." Why should man, for the sake of a few perishable pleasures, rob himself of such stupendous glory? Why should he not, like the Master, drink the bitter cup which the Father gave Him, and afterwards entered into glory? O! why not drink the bitter cup, and then follow his Lord through tribulations and sorrows into everlasting life!

The other power which we mentioned is called the word of life, the joyful, pleasant oil of joy, the Gospel of grace, which to the new man is spirit and life. It is attended with forgiveness of sin, produces peace, joy and consolation in the believing heart. In a word, it is in both aspects nothing else, (that is, the provision for sin-afflicted souls,) than Jesus Christ rich in grace, crucified for our sakes, and raised again for our justification, and who is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ready to help those that believe, and ever dispensing His mercies among the needy. This all-sufficient Saviour, now reigning amid the glories of the New Jerusalem, is now transforming into His image the souls that fly to Him, and will, as He has promised, make them heirs of the imperishable glories of the kingdom of heaven.

In regard to this two-fold power of this heavenly balm the Almighty speaks to His people under the ancient economy—"See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." Deut. 32:39. Although this is uttered and is to be understood with reference to the punishments and judgments which God would send upon the Jews, yet may it be applied here in view of what is written in the 36th verse—"For the Lord shall judge his people, and he will have compassion on his servants." "The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up." 1 Samuel 2:6. He kills and wounds through the word of the cross such as rebel against His spirit. And as a surgeon who, with a sharp instrument, rips open a felon or boil, or removes a corrupt member of the body, would not on that account be regarded as unkind and unfeeling, though he occasions great pain to the sufferer—he does it all for the benefit of the afflicted; so neither should we deem God unmerciful when he afflicts, since it is for our profit. A desperate disease demands sharp remedies. Our Lord Jesus, whose voice so often fell gently as dew upon weary and wounded hearts as He uttered words of comfort, spake to persecuting Saul in thunder tones, so that he was prostrated to the earth as by a clap of thunder, and he lay trembling and afraid, until the Lord raised him up and comforted him with a word of hope. Acts 9:3-6. He humbled the proud and exalted the humble. From these and other examples we can discover the two-fold power of the word.

The first effect is to kill, the second is to make alive. The first reveals the disease, the other gives health. The first is bitter and alarms, the other is sweet and pleasant. The one agitates the heart and conscience, causing the sinner fear, pain and sorrow, that the afflicted soul scarcely knows what has happened or where it will end; the other

brings the blessed sunlight into the heart, dispels the clouds, the vapor and the previous tempest, so that the soul, like the earth that was rocked by the thunder and drenched by the rains, looks up through its tears with smiles of gratitude to the God of mercies. The first effect is that of the refiner, who places the silver in its impure state into his crucible and subjects it to a severe heat, and stirs it until the dross is removed from the pure metal, when the heat and the crucible are taken away. This much of the two-fold effects of this spiritual balm may suffice for the present.

But we would not circumscribe our heavenly Physician, Jesus Christ, to these specified modes in His administering of the healing balm. I will not consider the ground of the coming grace of God, nor the incipient stage of repentance and the new birth, which belong to the first principles, as affirmed in Heb. 5-6; but the general mode in which the Divine Physician brings about the conversion of souls is thus presented in the Gospel. The Physician offers to the afflicted soul His help and cure, in the grace of God, by which He inspires faith, awakens from the death of sin and encourages the soul to seek Him, to love Him, and to understand and acknowledge his spiritual sickness. The Spirit of the Lord calls to the afflicted but slumbering sinner —"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." That is, you will see your spiritual sickness and learn to know Him as your Physician, and your soul will be restored to health and receive the salvation of God. The Lord Jesus grant us this, that we may seek through earnest prayer, each one for himself, the power and efficacy of this heavenly balm, that appreciating it as God's precious gift, we may be fitted to ascend into the presence of the Holy One, where there is fullness of joy, and obtain a place at His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER 26

Concerning the Test of the Soul's Physician and of the Heavenly Balm, the Word of God in Christ.

With a view to offer an example which may illustrate the condition of the afflicted as well as the character of the Physician and His balm, let us contemplate the miracle performed on one stricken with the palsy, whom the Lord healed not only internally of soul-sickness, but also restored his body to health by His almighty word, so that through those withered limbs the flood of life again coursed warmly. This is a true test of His divine mission, which He exhibited on earth before He permitted Himself to be addressed as the Physician of souls. "And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Matt. 9:2.

In this instance we behold in the sick a two-fold disease, bodily and spiritual, in like manner does the Physician impart comfort and medicine in the word of the Lord. For after He had said to the sick of the palsy, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven," from this it can be readily perceived that the first effects of the word, viz: alarm, fear, sorrow and penitence, had instantly been experienced by the afflicted, consequent upon which the Lord comforts, and the other effect of His balm which proceeded from the word of life, and which was an oil of gladness to the wounded spirit. There is of course nothing in the pains of the body that compares with that anguish of spirit which is produced by sin through an awakened and an accusing conscience. No other pains so reduce the body and prostrate the spirit, as the terrors inspired by a lively apprehension of God's wrath. Jesus, only as our soul's Physician, can relieve from those dreadful apprehensions,

and without Him, there is no other creature under heaven that can deliver or save.

We may also here readily comprehend the true skill, the art and mode of healing the soul, namely, that the heavenly Physician begins the work first of all internally, that is, by awakening the heart, and after stirring its profound depths, He corrects its evils and implants holy affections before He commences to change the outward life. He implants such a Divine energy within the soul, that it not only subdues the evil desires and sanctifies the thoughts, but from this holy centre there issues an influence that flows out into the daily life of the individual. The origin, or source of wickedness, as seen in the life of the depraved, is in the heart, as the Physician Himself has said: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, blasphemy." These are the things which pollute the man, and make him unclean and offensive in God's sight. Matt. 15:19,20.

This internal godly work manifests itself in this, that God the Father in the beginning thereof, directs the afflicted to His Son Jesus Christ, whom He sent into the world and ordained Him to be our Physician. John 6:44-65. He who hears this of the Father and learns, will come to Christ and allow himself to be helped, so that through the instrumentality of His balm the sinner is made whole. Thus, do I say, does the Lord commence His work of healing the soul: He stirs and awakens the heart of the sick, yea, often puts the whole internal man in commotion by His grace, and thus works from within, not from without, when He desires to restore health to the entire man. As it is written—"He saw their faith,"—that is, the faith of the sick man and of those who carried him—which confidence God the Father without doubt bestowed, and thereby drew them to His Son, the Physician Jesus, so that they sought Him, became

acquainted with Him, and by trusting in His power were made whole.

The evil spirit, the adversary of the soul, begins the work of ruin in the heart of man by exciting his sinful desires, perverts the will, subverts all purposes of good, takes away the love, the faith and the fear and obedience of God; and thus, after expelling everything good from the heart, and putting in its place the love of sin and its kindred evils, he proceeds in corrupting man, until like a worm commences the work of devastation in the seed of an apple, and from that extends his ravages until the whole is consumed, so does Satan carry forward his work, until he has utterly destroyed his victim. Behold! thus also must the heavenly Physician, Jesus Christ, in healing the soul, commence with the operations of His grace in the inner man. He must cleanse the heart, seize the evil spirit and his crew and cast them out, destroy their weapons, remove unbelief, and make all the members of the body servants in the cause of God and righteousness. These things did our Lord desire to teach us in the history of him who was sick of the palsy.

In order to present in a more forcible manner the divine power of His balm—that is, the irresistible energy of His healing word in its action upon the body and to manifest Himself as the Physician of the soul—He performed these external cures, which are much more easily accomplished than the healing of the soul, forasmuch as the one only extends to the perishable, but the other lays hold of eternity. Therefore it is further affirmed in the Gospel—"And behold certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee: or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of

the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed and walk, and go to thine own house. And he arose and departed to his own house. But when the multitude saw it, they marveled and glorified God, which had given such power to man."

Here we have again a beautiful portraiture of our heavenly Physician, Jesus Christ, and His work and office are suitably set forth. How He, through the energy of His almighty word, had both healed the inner and the outer man of this victim of the palsy. This clearly establishes the fact that He did not come into the world chiefly to heal the bodily wounds or afflictions of men, and that His blood was poured out not solely to heal a transient injury of the flesh, but more especially that the object of His mission and death had reference to the healing of that spiritual malady which perils the everlasting happiness of the soul. As He has said—"I came to call sinners to repentance;" but of this the Pharisees and Scribes did not know anything correctly, and although they most of all had need of this soul Physician, very few of them were healed, for they despised the Physician and rejected the counsel of God, and would on no account hear of His medicine, neither would they examine it or receive it.

The individual who yet to-day hears how Christ raised up the sick of the palsy, strengthened and made him whole, and takes knowledge through this that he is likewise afflicted with a similar disease, yea, that in truth his soul is smitten with the palsy, that his entire spiritual nature is paralyzed, so that of himself he is incapable of doing that which is good. If he then comes under a realizing sense of his sad state to the Physician Jesus, lays before Him his wounds and sickness, and consoles himself with the grace, the help and mercy of the Redeemer, and receives the balm of the living word; he will hear the precious words of the Lord resounding through his heart. Believe, son! Thy sins be forgiven thee. If he embraces the promise by faith, he shall

yet to-day be renewed and be joyful in his spirit. He will have inward consolation and receive strength and power, that he may joyfully and uprightly advance on the way to the kingdom of God, and finally obtain everlasting salvation. "For ever, O Lord, is thy word established in the heavens, and thy faithfulness endureth from age to age." Ps. 119.

Concerning this we have an interesting illustration in the centurion and ruler of Capernaum. For although he was a heathen, he recognized through the grace of God the Physician and the balm, as he found it to the comfort of all, and with a strong faith acknowledged the healing power of Christ, and praised and glorified His office as he said to Jesus—"O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak only a word and my servant shall be healed." The word of Christ was the healing to which the ruler appealed and which he desired. And what did the Lord answer? "He was astonished at his faith and said, Go, according to your faith so be it; and his servant was made whole in that very hour." Did this happen to the centurion, a man of the world, to whom, however, the Lord bore this testimony—that He had not found such great faith in Israel? As this ruler was the recipient of such a blessing, let no one doubt the willingness and ability of Christ to heal, for His compassion still yearns over sinners: neither let anyone faint while he hopes for His help. No afflicted soul will be neglected or left to perish, if he applies to this skillful Physician. Let him but acknowledge and feel his sickness, and let him come with an earnest heart and seek Christ, ask help of Him, and receive in love and in faith the word of life. However protracted or sudden and alarming the sickness may be, if the afflicted only perseveres in seeking help and comfort from the Physician Jesus, and trusts in Him, he shall assuredly find deliverance from all evil.

Hence, in the use of the Holy Sacrament, if we would derive comfort and obtain a healing blessing, it is absolutely

necessary that the Christian believer beforehand confesses and says—"O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but only speak a word, and my soul shall be healed." From this it is proper to infer that Christians or true believers seek their consolation, help, yea, the healing balm of the soul, with God in Christ, and have at all times through faith obtained these blessings directly from Christ. Without faith in the Lamb of God, slain as our passover, the use of the sacrament will profit nothing, nay, will increase our condemnation. Dear, afflicted soul, look up to Jesus, and feed on Him by faith daily, as the living manna that even now falls on every household that is sanctified by the Holy Ghost. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

CHAPTER 27

In what way an Individual may recognize the operation of this Balm, and know that the Physician has taken him under His treatment.

After we have considered the test of this heavenly Physician and His proficiency, we should not forget to examine ourselves with reference to the balm and its operation. We should carefully observe whether the Physician has received us, whether we are under His treatment, or whether He has forsaken us and we have rejected the remedy, or if this balm is working in us and what are its effects—that is, how much we have been benefited by it.

This will a person experience by the diminution of error in the heart, and its increase in the truth as it is in Christ, growing in faith and exhibiting a new life. If the soul is under the influence of Christ, old things pass away—the carnal mind, a life of sin, and the lusts of the flesh are all destroyed. When the afflicted soul has been convinced of sin by the Holy Ghost, and weeps and mourns over its sad condition, but begins to look to heaven to obtain help through Jesus, and is alarmed on account of its sinful life, it may safely conclude that the remedy for evil is doing its work effectually upon him.

Another token of the effectual working of the Divine balm is when the individual hates his sickness—that is, his sinful life—for the Physician hates the disease, and therefore applies His skill to the subduing of it. When, therefore, the afflicted begins to hate himself in his unsound state, and begins to deny himself and take up his cross, and follows the Physician, desiring the means of restoration and the health which the Lord can only give, then he agrees with the Physician, cheerfully does what is required of him, and the more thoroughly he is healed the more he loves the commandments of Christ—"yea, these are more precious

than gold: yea, than much fine gold." These are unmistakable signs that the Physician has received the person under His care, and that His remedy begins to work happily; if he is not at once healed, let him still wait, and pray, and hope, and ask the prayers of others in his behalf.

Although the Physician, Jesus Christ, knows the origin, the cause and the root of all the evils of body and soul, and is abundantly able to heal them, yet after we have become acquainted with the gracious hand of the Physician and His heavenly balm, yet is it meet that, as he would with a physician of the body, he should commune with Him concerning his spiritual sickness, and make the evils of his heart manifest to the Divine helper. Not trying to conceal, but faithfully own his disorders, and confess his loathsome malady, and call upon the Physician to restore his health and take away all his infirmities. As he begins to find out the value of the balm of life, let him take cheerfully all that is proffered by the Holy Spirit, and whenever any of the symptoms of the former disease appear, he must again resort through prayer and faith to the indulgent Physician who is ever ready to apply the healing balm. We should acknowledge our sickness—that is, confess our sins to Jesus —not because he has not from the first known all that is in us, and is cognizant of all our human ills and infirmities, but that He may see that we discover and lament the evils of our state. He knows all; is fully conversant with all that is within man, (John 2:25;) but this humiliation and confession are designed to remind us of our sickness, that we may more and more confess with sorrow and distress our unhappy and guilty state. We humble ourselves and lament our depravity, because we are blameworthy and have willingly sinned; but when we have seen the extent of our wretchedness and the depth of our misery occasioned by sin, we will rejoice the more when we experience the power of salvation, and with renewed spiritual health we look up

joyfully to heaven, praising the Lamb that was slain and that has taken away our sins.

Another token of returning health to the soul is when we are thankful to the Physician, when we praise His balm and proclaim to others his love and faithfulness, that they may also repair to Him and abide in Him, and look to Him for every blessing. This He also requires of us, not merely for the benefit which thereby accrues to others, but also on account of the good which such labors of love secure for us, concerning which there is much to be found in the Psalms. To praise the skill of this matchless Physician and to keep constantly in view the healing balm, is profitable, as it daily leads our meditation to those themes, and keeps up an association of our thoughts with those objects that fill the soul with glory.

Thus the afflicted soul, that has learned of Jesus and has been received into the Divine favor, knows full well from experience the efficacy of the heavenly balm and the goodness and mercy of the divine Physician. He has therefore come out of the dark and pestilential air of sin and walks in the light of God's favor, and now that he has become a new creature he has power through grace to partake of all those means provided in God's word for the strengthening of his soul, and may bring from the treasury which contains the balm of life such supplies as his infirmities may require, thus keeping under any symptoms that may appear of the disease which the great Physician has subdued. In seasons of doubt and temptation he repairs to the promises, knows from experience the particular promise or truth which will meet his case. Yea, the Bible is to him a very pleasant garden, which he enters to gather such fruits as his spiritual appetite craves, such flowers whose fragrance may refresh his spirit, and such herbs as are for the healing of the soul. O how delightful does he find the manifold provisions of grace! An heir of God and joint

heir with Christ, he rejoices amid the glories and the raptures of the kingdom of God, and sings to the praise of the balm and Physician through whom his soul is healed from all evil.

CHAPTER 28

Concerning the Service and the Servants of the Heavenly Physician, Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus, like other valued and affluent physicians, has His appointed service and servants. These are prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers, whose office it is to proclaim and publish Him as much as possible through the whole world as the Healer and Saviour of all men. They must praise His faithfulness, His love and mercy, which He exhibits towards the children of men and acquaint fully all afflicted ones—that is, all poor sinners—with His kingdom, grace, balm and benevolence, that they serve Him in the healing art as well as in the knowledge of this spiritual sickness, and direct all the afflicted to Him, and meekly invite and guide all the perishing to the Saviour of the world.

Their office, moreover, demands that they carefully preserve in their hearts the balm of life, which Christ himself gives and distributes, namely, the word of salvation, the word of health and everlasting life. They must also faithfully follow their Master and Physician, that their example may be a testimony to others of the efficacy and power of the balm which He administers for the healing of the soul. That they must not undertake anything without His will is evident from their relation to Him, and in their ministrations to sinners they must look to Him alone, and in all circumstances which may seem adverse they must fly to His bosom. As He is their Lord and Master, they must honor Him with a cheerful obedience; neither may they adulterate the medicine, nor sell old specifics for some new nostrum. These are the offices of a servant of this Physician: therefore, above all things, must he be truthful, firm and upright. He must moreover, be well informed in regard to the Physician and the balm, and must perfectly understand the virtue of medicinal plants, and know how and when to apply the

water and the oil, that all may minister to the comfort and health of the patients who are brought under his treatment.

Such a servant was the apostle Paul, (as well as other prophets and apostles and evangelists,) namely, a highly esteemed and unchangeable servant of our Lord Jesus. A servant of the New Testament, and a zealous and true steward of the mysteries of God; as he very beautifully writes to all the afflicted, as he speaks of himself and Timothy—"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." That is, we are not the physicians or Saviours, but only servants of the only Healer and Saviour, who serve to promote your salvation by carrying about and making known the balm of life. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:5,6.

Here we have the Lord Jesus likened unto the Father from whom He received His office and full power of healing, through whom He was also sealed. Him should the apostle proclaim, and with word and a holy life he should bear testimony of Him. To all poor sinners should he convey a joyful message concerning Him: he was to remain faithful in this holy service while he made Him known in all the world. He did not dare to do anything in this service, neither speak nor purpose, unless the Physician Jesus wrought it in him, as he himself declares. Rom. 15:18.

CHAPTER 29

It is not in all respects the same with the Servants of this Heavenly Physician, and the Servants of those who heal the body.

Here we are to remember that the servants of Jesus Christ are not in every particular, as those who serve a bodily physician, who assist in the preparation of the medicine, carry it to the sick and sometimes administer it in his absence. But the servants of this Spiritual Physician, do not attempt to work upon the balm of life, neither to assume the place of the Physician in administering it to the sick, but they only point to the Physician, describe the medicine, and in this way serve Him.

And notwithstanding they carry, so to speak, the vessel that contains the balm and salve that are good for the wounded soul, and make known by their holy life the excellency and power of the means provided by Jesus for the restoration of man to the Divine favor; yet does Christ the Physician never take from their vessel the healing balm for others. Nor could they, if they would, by their own power or skill restore the health of a single soul. The Holy Spirit is associated with Christ in His work of healing, and like the apothecary who compounds medicines according to the prescriptions sent by the physician, thus also is it the office of the Spirit to take of the things of Christ and show them to the sinner. For while the servants of this physician have the oil and the balm which he provides for their own use, they have not the power to heal others, but are merely the instruments through whom a knowledge of Christ and the Holy Spirit is conveyed to the miserable and wretched children of sin. The healing part properly belongs to these divine persons, and therefore no faithful servant of the Lord ever asks sinners to come to him, or to receive from his hands the grace of healing, but always magnifies the office

of Christ and guides the stricken and afflicted to the feet of Him who has said: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

Again, Christ first healed His servant Paul, (and also others,) and preserved in him this heavenly balm, that he might continually bear witness of its power, and serve the Physician with a joyful and free spirit. Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, had indeed in his own heart the oil and balm, which is the Holy Ghost, to his everlasting well-being, but then he served his Master acceptably; yet never did he represent himself as the physician of souls; neither would he attempt to cure by his own power. He was too faithful, and had too high an appreciation of the character of Christ, to usurp His office, or to presume upon the exercise of prerogatives which pertained to God alone. Therefore, although he was made whole by the skill of this Physician, and had found the balm efficacious in the healing of his own spirit, yet he never invites souls to come to him for life, neither did he ever assert that he and those in his calling could heal souls. They pointed no one to themselves, nor to their service as meritorious, nor to anything outward through which sinners might attain salvation and health of soul. But they directed all to Him who had healed their spiritual maladies; namely, to Christ, who had helped them; for they knew full well that there was but one ordained of God who could restore health and beauty to the vitiated soul. But they found pleasure in the service of Jesus, and were never happier than when they could incline others to come with humble hearts and penitent minds to this great Restorer of our race, for they knew too well that unless those poor sinners would betake themselves to Jesus, they must perish forever.

In regard to this service and the office of a servant, he (Paul) wrote to the Corinthians, as he could not endure that anything should be taken from the honor, the praise and the glory of the Physician, Jesus, and given to the

servants of the Lord. For this cause he clearly distinguishes between the work of the Lord and that of the servant, as he says: "For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who, then, is Paul? And who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, as the Lord gave to every one." 1 Cor. 3:4,5. That is, they are not lords, nor the bestowers of a living faith, or the health of the soul, but servants through whose labor ye were brought to the Physician, Jesus, and made whole.

We are servants, says Paul, further, in v. 6 and 7, and have that which the Lord hath given us. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." But what is this increase? What but the health of the soul which succeeds the forgiveness of sin and the reception of the Holy Ghost. It is the living growth of the new man in the grace of God, which vitality is given and wrought not by the servant, but by the Lord. It is the work of the divine Physician, Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, and Paul was outwardly serving the cause by preaching and by directing the sinner to the King of grace. He was always proclaiming the skill and power of Christ, and among poor, afflicted sinners he seemed as though he knew nothing else than to speak of his Lord and Master; namely, that He, through His cross and suffering, became our physician in His blood, as he had before said. "For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." In whom we have a knowledge of our spiritual sickness, and in whom we also find the balm of life and eternal salvation.

CHAPTER 30

The relation which this Balm sustains to the Health of the Christian Church and her Members.

A distinguished physician in a large city has often many afflicted and men with various diseases under his care and treatment; these he proposes to cure by drawing from his medicinal treasury such antidotes as may be subservient to this end. Although these sick persons are scattered here and there, he attends upon them as frequently as he can, and when he cannot see them all he sends those in his service to minister to the wants of his patients. Very similar is it with Christ, the divine Physician. His afflicted ones are scattered all through the world, among all people, in all climes; but before Him they all lie as in one city, and He visits each one with His grace, and permits His servants to direct all to the same office, where they are exhorted to remain steadfast under His treatment. Although they are separated in person and are far from each other, and even do not know each other—but they all know the Physician and His balm, through which they obtain relief and through which they are by the same Spirit restored to the same spiritual health in one body or congregation, are baptized under the Head of the church, Jesus Christ, and drink in the same spirit. 1 Cor. 12:13. From this people the forementioned sick are gathered by the Physician, Jesus Christ, into one fold, who shall with Him inherit and possess the kingdom of heaven. For Jesus was to die for this people, and not for them alone, but that He might bring together the scattered children of God. John 11:52.

This is now the holy Christian church, the congregation of the people of God, the bride and the body of Christ. This is the company of all the chosen of God, (as Augustine describes the church,) who are scattered all over the world, but through the oneness of the Spirit and faith

through Christ, are gathered into one congregation or church, are healed and saved, and who alone are properly known to Christ, their Head, Lord and King, as they are governed by Him, and grow and are nourished and sustained by His holy influence, which descends upon them as the dew upon the grass.

We do not speak here of the Christian church and her members, as she shall appear according to His purpose all gathered in eternal life, when her members will have no need of any more of the balm of life, for then all remaining infirmities are taken away, and she is pure and perfect and possessed of everduring health, for then all tears shall be wiped away from all eyes and God shall be all in all. That is called the church triumphant, of which we do not now speak, but of the congregation of believers, as it is yet here upon earth, and how she is born in Christ through His spirit, and which as in Him the Head she is united, and by the service of apostles and servants of Christ she is gathered and built up, whose members the heavenly Physician has healed, and to which He still adds of such as shall be saved.

The holy Christian church, in which we believe, is scattered through the whole world, and is only known to Christ, into which are gathered the children of God to be nourished and healed, yea, they are already healed before God in the new birth of the Spirit through faith. But they are in reality partially sick on account of the flesh and blood which still clings to them, in which are yet found the remains of sin; on this account they will require the help of the Physician while they live. They are whole according to the new man born of God, sick in virtue of their old nature, which however diminishes day by day, and will be renewed that their spiritual health may improve.

Briefly, if we consider them as they appear in God's favor, we shall discover the members of the body of Christ—that is, the congregation of saints or the church—without

spot or wrinkle. Eph. 5:27. This character they acquire through the Divine skill and knowledge of the Physician and their faith in Him, and they are consequently not regarded by Almighty God any more according to the old man of sin—that is, that which is not entirely healed of their infirmities—but He looks upon them as the purchase of the Saviour's blood and as new creatures. Their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, and they have received the Holy Spirit, who is a perfect balm for the soul, and whatever of evil and weakness there may remain in their natures, will not for the sake of Christ and the Spirit be laid to their charge. Hence they no longer walk as formerly in the blindness of the flesh, but in the spirit and in light, and through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body. They grow in grace, and under the influence of the heavenly Physician advance in purity, until even their flesh shall rise glorified and holy from the tomb on the morning of the resurrection of the just. To the dawn of that glorious day faith now looks with joyful hope, for out of the ashes of this poor shattered mortality there shall arise a body like unto Christ's, clothed with the youth and beauty of a fadeless immortality.

Concerning such a church and the spiritual health of her members, as she already appears before God, Paul speaks to the Ephesians when he says—"Christ is the head of the church, and the Saviour of her body;" yea, her Helper and Physician, as he afterwards affirms. That He has loved the church, and out of great love gave Himself even unto death for her, that He might redeem her, so that He might sanctify her through His blood and cleanse her through the washing of regeneration by the word of life, that He might present the church to Himself,—a glorious church, without spot and without blemish, or wrinkle or any such thing,—but that she should be holy.

There are some teachers who do not distinguish between the new and the old man, and who do not

understand the Christian church; who suppose that this passage points to the future church triumphant, all perfected, although the text unmistakably points to the present militant church. He speaks of her as she is here begotten of the flesh and members of Christ's body: as through the service of apostles, evangelists, and such servants as He enumerates in the fourth chapter is built up, sanctified and blameless: such were the Ephesians and all true believers.

Paul says Jesus Christ, our Saviour, has healed the church and her members, has washed, purified and sanctified them, namely, cleansed them from their impurities and spiritual sickness. Wherefore? Aye, therefore, that they might walk to the praise of His grace and glory, holy and blameless. That they should henceforth no more be the servants of sin unto death, but of righteousness and life. In his Epistle to the Romans he speaks yet more fully on the importance of the church's purity, and says nothing unclean shall enter into the city of God, the New Jerusalem—that is, the kingdom of heaven. In the Song of Solomon it is written —"Thou art very fair, my love, and there is no spot on thee; thy sweet odors are more precious than frankincense."

From this it may be easily inferred what the Christian church is, and the aspect in which we are to view her members in relation to the balm of life and spiritual health, in how far they have become whole, and to what extent they are yet sick. They are yet living in a world where they have to do with flesh and blood. But we may also see that those err who suppose that Paul, when he speaks of the purified and sanctified church, points to the future in yonder world—to the holy in heaven who compose the general assembly of the just. But such teachers look only upon the outward, and regard the simple mass of people, who go to hear a discourse or partake of the sacrament, but who do not look upon their spiritual state as it is in God's sight, nor

yet regard Christ as the head of the church. Neither have they discerned the Lord's body: how it is joined to the head, and how the members of His body partake of His life. But the Holy Scriptures do not speak otherwise of the church than that which we have already advanced. 1 Cor. 12; 2 Cor. 11; Col. 2; Eph. 4:5.

In regard to the parables in the Gospel of the tares, the rejected fishes, the foolish virgins, and the unproductive branches, &c., with which some attempt to support their theory, these can all be interpreted consistently with the plan of salvation without adopting the idea that the sacraments are sources of grace. What profit is baptism and the Lord's Supper if the heart is not changed? There is no power in the ordinances of religion to change the soul against the consent of the individual. The foolish virgins, the tares, &c., are intended to represent such as imitate the example of true believers: they assume their form of conversation and outwardly bend to the usages of the church, and thus deceive even the ministers of religion, until there is a manifestation of their true character and they stand exposed as hypocrites.

The parables to which we have referred should not be understood as designed to represent open and gross sinners, but those hypocritical professors who mingle with God's people, who never regarded themselves as spiritually sick, but are puffed up on account of their works and ceremonies. They in their pride esteem themselves whole, although they are the most afflicted in God's sight, and in consequence of their arrogance and censorious spirit, are the most miserable of all the sinners that are healed by Jesus Christ. They reject the relief offered by the Saviour, and by their walk and conduct deprive themselves of the healing power of the Physician, because they do not esteem Him nor use His balm, but desire to help themselves; they

may not consider themselves as sinners, but as righteous persons.

The Christian church is holy, and as the noble bride of Christ, altogether pure and glorious in the sight of God. Although she was sick and unholy, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, offered Himself up for her, and through His own blood He healed and purified and sanctified her. The members of the church, in consequence of the flesh and indwelling sin, are still somewhat sick and imperfect; as James says, "In many things we all offend," and therefore have they daily need of the Physician and the Pardoner of sin, until they are made perfect. Yet before God, according to his foreknowledge, they are already through His grace whole, for they are cleansed and sanctified with the blood of Christ through His life-giving word, and with which Christ, the High Priest, still sprinkles them to salvation. Yea, they are according to His word entirely pure, although they must humbly walk while in the flesh and with all God's saints pray —"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." They know, with Paul, that in their flesh there dwelleth no good thing, and that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit of God. They also exclaim with John—"If we say that we have no sin (that is, we are not sick) we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That is, He helps us and delivers us from all the remaining evils of our spiritual sickness. 1 John 1:8,9. Although all Christians have sins, they should not therefore commit sin, for he who has not been healed by Christ the Physician, neither does the work of one who has been restored to spiritual health, can in no way be regarded as a member of the Christian church.

From the company of members which compose the Christian church and whom the Lord Jesus has helped, He chooses special servants, who are to make everyone

acquainted with the Physician of the soul, and through their instruction and life also bring many to Him. For they know that all men by nature are sick, depraved and imperfect: that they are full of sin and have need of this Physician. The servants of the Lord comfort men by the promise of health to all who come in faith to this Physician. The servants do not claim power to give spiritual health, neither do they pretend to heal the wounds of the soul, but joyfully point all to the Lord Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour. Neither do they conceal from the despisers of Christ the injury and damnation that must result from such a course. But they are also forbearing, friendly and patient towards the afflicted. "For we (says Paul) preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, and we your servants for Jesus' sake."

The foregoing is said of the service of Christ and to the praise and honor of our heavenly Lord, whose servant Paul was, and who would not have the glory of healing souls ascribed to himself nor to anyone, but to the Lord Jesus. He only served, and the Master healed; he admonished the sick to repair to the Physician and seek His help. St. Paul speaks under the tuition of the Holy Ghost, 2 Cor. 4, concerning this balm of life and of the grace of the Gospel, which he, by order of this divine Physician, carried about. "We have this treasure," namely, the balm of Christ, "with which we and all wounded consciences are healed; and by which all feeble hearts are comforted, and all the afflicted in body and soul healed to everlasting life. This precious treasure," says he, "we have in earthen vessels, that the power might be of God and not of us." Here then we perceive clearly that the balm does not belong to the servant Paul, neither does it proceed from his ability. Therefore does the power of healing—that is, righteousness and salvation—come not from the servant into the heart and soul of the spiritually sick, that no one might glory in the flesh; but it proceeds directly from God in Christ, who is the Head of the church, the fountain of health,

of salvation and life, so that the glory of this power redounds again to the praise of God forever.

That all this is to be understood of the heavenly balm in its influence upon the sick, is evident from the language of Paul, 2 Cor. 2:14-17. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life...For we are not as many who corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ."

In a word, Christ heals and treats through the Spirit, who is indeed much more present to us through grace than the servants of Christ could be, as it is also written in the Psalms—"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, that call upon him in truth." So that the true knowledge of God and Christ is through the Spirit, whom Paul serves by laboring with the outward man, to bring him under the influence of the Gospel; but the Spirit applies the balm and imparts courage, peace and life.

We have endeavored to make this point clear,—so transparent that there may be no room for misapprehension,—that while the chosen servant of God has received a special anointing, divine strength, and various gifts from Christ, that these might minister to his own health and to that of others, and that while his influence should be good and his virtues breathe a delicious fragrance around the path of life; yet must not the afflicted seek in the minister or his service that healing balm which restores the soul. The sin-sick soul must seek help from the Lord Jesus; the servant must point the inquirer to the right hand of God, where He sits who dispenses the blessings of life and salvation. The servant cannot pour this blessing into the

hearts of men; but the Holy Spirit quickens and makes alive. Where the Spirit is not present, there is assuredly nothing properly done towards the restoration of the soul—there is no improvement—everything is dead and without benefit; the servant may do how and as he will.

The Lord Jesus will Himself apply the salve to the wounds of the soul and heal her maladies; this should be shown for the comfort of the sick, for no one can enter into the depths of hearts, nor to the bottom of the soul, nor into the secrets of the conscience, but God in Christ through His word of life. Therefore does Paul say in the passage already cited, that the power and the ability are not with the servant but in God. That the sweet savour of the balm with which we are healed is Christ's and not his own, as he also elsewhere expresses himself. "But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me." 1 Cor. 15:10.

Therefore should we not direct afflicted souls to outward recipes, to human ceremonies, or church regulations, with a view finally to obtain spiritual health, but away from and up through all to the fountain of life—to Christ, the spring of all our spiritual joys and hopes. Directing the sin-sick to the Physician Jesus, to His blood and Spirit, and to His saving word of grace, they will not be deceived nor disappointed. None should regard the outward forms of religion as the heavenly balm, but simply to Jesus Christ, his own office in the life-giving power of health, should be ascribed all glory, as in Psalm 115:1. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory."

CHAPTER 31

How the Heavenly Balm is represented in the Holy Scriptures, and how its manifold properties are set forth under various names.

In regard to this Heavenly Balm, and the appointed servants who follow the Lord Jesus, and in their ministrations to the church of God dispense these blessings, the apostle speaks of it in another place as the work of salvation. The reason for this name is, that the word heals the wounded conscience. In Acts 13:26, he thus preaches to the Jews: "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is this word of salvation sent." Here we are to observe for whom this Balm is sent, namely, in behalf of the children of Abraham who fear God, whether Jews or gentiles. There are such as are ordained to eternal life, and belong to the kingdom of God. They have, in an evangelical sense, felt the evil of sin, and experienced in their souls the poison of the old serpent, and having seen and lamented their spiritual disorder, they yearned and sighed for the Physician and His balm. They are the true-hearted and meek, who cherish a godly fear and have abiding sorrow for their sins. "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." Prov. 14:27. Again, those who fear the Lord will prepare their hearts for the word of salvation, which is able to save their souls. "Be it known to you (says Paul) therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

We have then briefly comprehended in the sermon of Paul the substance of this Divine means, though in various words, yet meaning the same thing—that is, the heavenly Physician and the balm of life, which is the word of God. The

apostle also mentions the sickness of the soul, which is sin, or rebellion against God and other iniquities. Afterwards he speaks of spiritual health, which is the forgiveness of sin, life and righteousness, which are all beautifully presented in the labors of Paul, and also how these are related to Jesus and obtained by faith in His atoning merits. He has clearly proved that neither Moses nor the law (much less other doctrines of men) are able to deliver from sin—that is, heal the soul of its manifold infirmities—but that Jesus Christ is the only Physician, and that His word, which is spirit and life and the power of God, is the only balm of life by which the wounds which sin has inflicted can be cured, and the soul healed and made a joyful heir of the kingdom of God.

Therefore I affirm that it is not an unmeaning phrase which Paul uses when he calls it the word of salvation, since it heals the wounded conscience, while it makes the person pious and righteous. For the same reason, when he addresses Titus and Timothy, he calls this spiritual balm the wholesome doctrine and the healing word of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that through this ointment and the blood of Christ the broken heart is bound up and the afflicted soul is made whole. Again, he calls this balm the word of consolation. For what can be more soothing to the afflicted than to have his pains diminished, yea, that through the Holy Spirit he obtains as a gift everlasting health? In 2 Cor. 5:18,19, he calls this divine medicine the word of reconciliation, because it reconciles alienated and disobedient man to God, and brings him into fellowship with his Lord. "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." He has sealed us to this ministry—He has given unto us the Holy Spirit and qualified us to proclaim

publicly to you this balm of life, in which capacity we serve the Physician.

"Now then we are ambassadors (says Paul) for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God." As if he had said, Jesus Christ does no longer speak or act for Himself outwardly, but willing that you should become acquainted with the balm of life and know of the healing art, He has chosen us, that we might serve you in external things for Him to your salvation. Suffer then the Lord Jesus to heal you, that ye may be made whole. And hereupon follows a beautiful conclusion as he says—"For he (that is, God the Father) hath made him (that is, His beloved Son, who had no personal disobedience or sin,) to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God through him." He who prayerfully meditates on this passage will ere long learn to know better the Physician, whom to know is life everlasting.

In Rom. 1:16, he calls this balm the Gospel of Christ. "It is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth." Then again he calls it the word of faith, because it is alone through faith that it can be received into the soul, and through which the heart is sanctified. Through the power of the word the soul is transformed, man is made a new creature, and his thoughts and affections are lifted from the perishable objects of life to that crown of glory that is offered to all who endure faithful unto the end. "Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. 1:22,23.

Behold how Peter here designates the word of God as a living seed, that falls into the believing heart, through which we are born again and brought from death to life. For it is true, as we have already remarked, that whatever this

balm of life operates in the believer, is only an effect of its own nature. For it is spiritual health—it is the power, strength, peace, life and everlasting salvation. All these, together with inestimable heavenly treasure, does this balm secure to the believing soul. It makes sound heavenly-minded men, who do not think nor live according to flesh and blood, but they are minded according to God and walk in the Spirit. This is, however, not attained by any creature power, but is given by Christ to them that love and obey His Gospel.

There are other names by which this balm of life is known in the Holy Scriptures. It is called bread, the true bread of the children of God, that drives away the hunger of the soul, and strengthens the weakness of the heart. From this bread the Canaanitish woman begged to obtain but a single crumb, for her and her daughter's health. It was concerning this that David in the spirit of prophecy said —"And bread that strengtheneth the heart of man." "This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, whereof if a man eat he shall never die."

Again, this heavenly balm is called water. The water of grace and life, which Christ gives and through which the afflicted, panting soul is quickened, refreshed and made whole, and concerning which the Saviour said to the Samaritan woman—"Whosoever shall drink the water that I will give him, shall thirst never more; but the water that I give, shall be in him a well springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14. To this water of life does the prophet Isaiah invite, when he cries—"Ho! every one that thirsteth; come ye to the water of life; and he that hath no money come ye, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Isa. 55:1. Thus also does the Spirit cry to a perishing world in Rev. 22:17—"Whosoever is athirst, let him come; and whosoever will, let him partake of the waters of life freely." "And wherever this stream shall flow it will give life." Ez.

47:8-12. That is, this water is the vivifying and fructifying power of the heart, and shall clothe our world with the beauty of salvation.

Another emblem of this heavenly balm is fire. That divine fire which consumes the internal sickness—that is, sin and the evil desires of the flesh—and purifies the heart, concerning which Christ says—"I am come to kindle a fire on earth, and I wish it to burn already." And in Mal. 3:2,3—"For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness."

This heavenly balm is finally spoken of as the tree of life. The fruit of this tree shall be for the nourishment of pious souls, and its leaves shall be for the healing of nations. "To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life that is in the midst of the Paradise of God." But who could enumerate the manifold names under which this heavenly balm, this unspeakable treasure is represented in God's word? And all this through the love and grace of God. In it are concealed eternal glory, unfading riches, an imperishable kingdom: and this all is offered to poor, hell-deserving sinners, and freely bestowed on believing souls through the atoning merits of Jesus Christ. How sad the condition of those who have no desire to be relieved! Even God mourns over them in that pathetic language—"Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is the health of the daughter of my people not recovered?"

CHAPTER 32

The Necessity and Value of the Holy Scriptures to a correct apprehension of the Divine Physician and the nature of this Heavenly Balm.

We have now presented the heavenly balm under a variety of names, such as the eternal word of life, as well as the human nature of Christ in the word of the Lord Jesus, and also the Holy Ghost and the grace of God, and many other terms under which this remedy for afflicted souls is imaged. And all was then summed up in this: that Jesus Christ, together with His riches, is the Saviour, the Physician and the Balm of our souls. Now the question arises, whether the Holy Scriptures may not also be regarded as a medicine for the soul? Upon this point we desire to speak wisely and cautiously. The Scriptures, as contained in the Old and New Testament, were pronounced by the Spirit of God; they were written by the direction of God, who moved holy men to teach, to reprove, to instruct and to enlighten mankind, and were recorded for the benefit of all Christian believers, that they might be profitable to their knowledge of Christ and to their faith in the Saviour of the world. We should therefore gladly hear the word of God and study it diligently, that we may thereby be exercised in the grace of God. The Holy Scriptures are worthy of our esteem, and we should regard them as a precious treasure, and love them above all other writings, for however excellent the latter may be they are not divine. But although the Scriptures are more precious than gold, they cannot subserve as a physician to the soul, for the word of itself cannot heal or save anyone. This is manifest from the scribes in our Saviour's day, and is also evident in those who at this time handle and teach this word, but are themselves strangers to God. The letter killeth, the Spirit maketh alive. Although the Lord Jesus acts through many instrumentalities, yet the office of spiritual

Physician belongs solely to Him, and He alone can exercise it through the Spirit in the regeneration and sanctification of souls. The Father invested the Son with power and sealed Him to this work of salvation. Our Lord teaches this fact distinctly as He speaks to the Jews—"Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." "But ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

Here then we see clearly what the office of the Holy Scriptures is, and at the same time we discover the office which peculiarly belongs to Jesus Christ, as our divine Physician, and He alone has eternal life. As the author of life, He alone is able to bestow life—that is, spiritual health—upon those who truly believe. Therefore do the Scriptures show us who this Physician of souls is and what the balm of life is, while they also speak of the sick and the disease from which they are suffering. The Bible testifies abundantly concerning the promised Messiah, and also with respect to the balm of life by which He was designed to work His wondrous cures. But the word of God is not in itself the balm of life for perishing souls; not more so than the minister of Christ, neither should it be so regarded; but the Spirit gives efficacy to the truth.

This fact is beautifully illustrated in the example of the prophet and his servant as recorded in 2 Kings 4:31. The servant Gehazi in vain attempted to bring back to life the child of the Shunammite woman, but the prophet Elisha must himself come down and with his own breath infuse life into the child. Christ, our Elisha, must Himself come down from heaven, that, as a divine Physician, He might heal and make alive poor sinners. Neither servant nor staff, neither prophet nor the word, neither Moses nor the law could restore the spiritually dead to life.

Thus it is even now: He who is the life of the world must animate the dead spirit of sinners with His life-giving

breath, for only through Him can we be made whole, pure and holy, and become partakers of everlasting life. The Shunammite woman was not satisfied with the servant or the staff of the prophet, but Elisha must come himself; thus also must we seek Jesus in true faith, and not trust in anything but Him. And this can only take place when we lift our hearts above all other objects, and look beyond the mountains that intervene to Christ and fix our affections upon Him who sitteth at the right hand of God. We must, as much as possible, lift our afflicted mind through grace to God, and as we are taught by Paul, "present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service."

This is, moreover, abundantly presented in the Psalms for our comfort—how the Holy Spirit, through the prophet, promises health and deliverance. "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." Ps. 123:1. And again, Ps. 121:1,2—"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Paul also directs us to the same source when he speaks of the incipient operations of this heavenly balm. "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 10:22. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: for he is faithful that promised. Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." In regard to love and good works we understand especially that the individual abides with the Physician, and that as his salvation has already commenced, he is anxious to have it perfected. Blessed are those whose strength is in Christ, and who follow Him with all the heart. Ps. 84:5.

CHAPTER 33

Wherefore God has ordained the services of the Sanctuary; and how it is to be marked that the Servants of this Divine Physician and Shepherd are themselves sometimes called Spiritual Physicians and Shepherds.

We have shown from the Holy Scriptures that Jesus Christ, the heavenly Physician, does Himself execute His divine office in ministering to the afflicted, and that He personally confirms and establishes His mission. That from Himself, through the issues of His power and Spirit, there proceeds the balm which blesses and imparts health. Yet notwithstanding these facts, He would not have undervalued the service to which His chosen and sent servants are called, who understand this balm of life and this oil of joy, and who, knowing Christ and His medicine for the afflicted, are able to serve Him by directing the poor and perishing to the source of life. Forasmuch as man is not flesh and blood simply, but these combined with soul and spirit, thus constituting a two-fold nature; thus also has the Lord been willing to deal with him after a two-fold manner, and enable him to obtain a knowledge of the internal and external natures of His kingdom. The internal character of man learns through Christ and His spirit, but the external through His chosen servants, the Scriptures, visible sacraments, and creatures of His power. "The spirit of truth will testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness." John 15:26,27.

Thus has a merciful God, through His internal healing power in Christ, and out of love and goodness, also ordained an external service by chosen servants, teachers and ministers, in whom He placed a great treasure for the outward man; so that the whole being, not only within, but also without, might be healed. Hence he receives instruction in regard to the Physician and the balm, and obtains a knowledge of his sickness by being reminded of his

depravity; thus awakened to a sense of his condition, he is conducted to Jesus, and his soul and body are sanctified and sealed to the day of redemption. Our gracious and merciful God and Father in Jesus Christ has placed over against the internal work of the Spirit these visible solemnities of religion, that the ministrations of the word and the sacraments in His church might redound to the praise and glory of Him who has ordained our Christian worship.

Notwithstanding these means of grace, we are not to presume that the Master, the Physician Christ, is limited or confined to service or servants, that He is circumscribed in His gracious operations to this or that place; but God operates in Christ according to His freedom, without law, or ordinance or rule, other than His own pleasure. The Saviour should, therefore, be precious to us at all times and in all places, for the spirit worketh where he will, and may make to the soul a palace out of a prison. Yet such a delightful service and office is that to which the servant is called, that the faithful minister, who out of gratitude to His Lord, conveys the balm of life and the oil of joy, through which he himself was made whole to the afflicted whom he serves, and for the sake of his Lord he holds these remedies for spiritual sickness in high estimation, concerning which the Spirit admonishes through Paul. "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." 1 Tim. 5:17. The word of God is the source of the balm for the soul, and the wholesome doctrine of the Holy Ghost delivers from eternal death, and makes us spiritually whole. For it is written, "Honor the Physician with marked distinction, that you may have Him in the time of need." Although this might be regarded as spoken pre-eminently of the Lord Jesus, yet may it also with propriety be applied to those subordinate Physicians and watchers over souls, who according to the command of their Lord, minister to afflicted men, and

faithfully administer the balm of His word. But these do not point to themselves, but direct the afflicted to the true Physician of whom they testify.

But the Lord Jesus out of pure love and grace often ascribes to His servants, that which He does through them, and also throws the shield of His personality about them and identifies Himself with them so closely that He regards the rejection of them as though the indignity were offered to the Master: "He that believeth in me, shall do the works that I do, and greater works, because I go to the Father." John 14:12. "He that heareth you, heareth me." It happens, therefore, that the servants of the chief Physician, Christ, are also called physicians, just as they under the great Shepherd of the sheep are called shepherds of souls. For whoever is sent forth by Christ, is also sealed by the Holy Spirit to the office of shepherd, or carer of souls. The Lord and master of these servants further shows His interest in them, in that He works in them and through them with Divine power, strengthens them and helps, that the balm which they administer to the sick may be blest and become effectual to his health and salvation.

Thus did our Lord at first send out His apostles clothed with power to wake the dead, to cast out devils, to cleanse the lepers, and to heal all manner of sickness. These are, therefore, called (1 Cor. 3:9) co-workers with God. Yea, He Himself, as frequently said, takes up His abode in them, and accomplishes all this in their service. As he has been exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, He is the great dispenser of spiritual gifts; yet in view of His exaltation He suffered the believer to look upon those who minister to him as his physicians. The intelligent and pious minister understands full well that whatever good he effects, is to be ascribed to the power, and grace, and spirit of the great Restorer of souls, and not to Himself. 1 Cor. 12:11. He knows that God works everything in believing souls,

therefore, He directs all things to this end, that Christ, with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, may receive all the honor and the glory.

Thus did Paul when the Iconians were about to offer sacrifice to him and Barnabas, when he healed one who was a cripple from his mother's womb. "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men as ye are." Acts 14:15. Peter, when he saw the Jewish multitude wondering and amazed when, in the name of Jesus, he had healed the lame man, also ascribed the glory to the Lord. "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness, we had made this man to walk? Faith in Jesus Christ hath given him this soundness in presence of you all." Acts 3:12,16.

While we are here speaking of the subordinate servants of the great Physician Jesus, we must also observe that as intelligent and skillful physicians of the body are governed in their prescriptions by the age, the nature, or idiosyncrasies of the patient, and also have respect to the character of the disease, so that they may administer that which is profitable to the afflicted; the same rules are to be observed in spiritual things. If a physician has a student of the healing art under his care, and sends him to visit persons under his treatment, the subordinate is always subject to the directions of his superior. The same regulation should be observed by those who are in the service of Jesus Christ. He has set apart His word, His death, His flesh and His blood for all men, for their spiritual healing, and now those who minister in these holy things are directed to impart to all such a measure of this heavenly balm as the capacities and wants of different men may require. Some must be nourished upon the milk of the word, others may be able to partake of strong meat. "The peace of God (says Sirach) is over all the earth." Therefore must the servants or subordinate physicians exercise great diligence, first in

obtaining a thorough knowledge of this heavenly balm, and learn to discriminate properly, that they may give to each one in due season his portion. They must also strictly adhere to the commands of Christ, and present Him in all His offices to the afflicted, hold Him constantly in the highest estimation, await help from Him, that their labors for the sick that are entrusted to their care may not be neglected or grow worse and perish.

And since this internal sickness of the soul is much more serious, weighty and dangerous than all other afflictions of the body, we should so much the more earnestly implore Almighty God, and the chief Physician Jesus, to send us good and faithful spiritual physicians. We should pray for ministers and laborers, as He Himself has taught us, that we may have provided against our weakness, our ignorance and forgetfulness, in their faithful warnings and admonitions, so shall we be encouraged and built up in our faith, and be able to bring others to the fountain of health.

We are also exhorted to prove by their works those who represent themselves as servants of the Physician, and examine the spirits whether they be of God. That we may know in truth those who come to us, and what the nature of their ministrations is, and the kind of balm they prescribe. We should be convinced that the servant points to Christ, and glorifies and praises the Master of life; yea, and ascertain whether he truly knows the Lord Jesus, is thoroughly acquainted with the Word which is balm for the soul, and carries it in his heart, which may be known by the fruits of his life and the influence of his example, whether he goes after the sin-sick into the highways among the hedges, and leads them directly to Christ. All these things must we diligently consider, that we may not receive a false prophet instead of a true one, an unfaithful for a faithful one, one who leads rather the flock away from, than to the Lord and

Master of His balm. But the afflicted soul should itself learn to discriminate between the servant and the Lord, and understand the character of the medicine which it uses, whether the balm works within him, promoting his health and comfort as it certainly should. In a word he should observe whether this balm of life awakens joy and brings consolation, and whether his afflicted spirit is restored to health and salvation.

All these things should in truth be patiently considered in Christ, by all those who console themselves with the hope of salvation and yearn for everlasting life. It should also be the constant desire of such to increase in wisdom, in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus. The ancient proverb is yet to-day significant: "Beware of the unskillful physician," which is to be pondered amid the distresses of the soul and the conscience much more earnestly than in seasons of bodily distress. But who are the unskillful and inexperienced physicians? There are both bodily and spiritual physicians who are so inexperienced, that they have no skill either in determining the nature of the disease which they are to subdue, neither understand the constitution of the body or the soul. Of such should we beware, who rely upon one thing, or one recipe for all diseases, who make little inquiry into the nature of the sickness and manifest no zeal with the afflicted soul, yea, who are themselves sick and cannot help themselves. There are also compounders who adulterate the medicine, who otherwise obtain their remedies from the right source; or they are not able so to administer the balm of life, as to quicken, strengthen, and console the poor afflicted soul in God's grace. These cannot establish their skill either from experience, neither have they derived it from the Holy Scriptures. Beware then, those of you who would be established and confirmed in the faith and in the hope of

glory, of those who themselves are ignorant of Christ, and who know not that they have passed from death to life.

The Lord, our heavenly Physician Jesus Christ, heal our hearts of all sickness. Deliver us from all evil desires and propensities, and fill our souls with holy affections. O, my God, do thou grant that the Lord Jesus, may be our salvation, and remain our consolation and balm in the Holy Spirit, so that we may be made spiritually whole, be purified and qualified for His name's sake, to suffer, and make us steadfast in professing the truth, that the Divine healing may be perfected in Him and God the Father, that we may be fitted to dwell forever in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.
CASPAR SCHWENCKFELD.

O, thou eternal Spirit of grace, sanctify and bless to the present happiness and the future felicity of every reader of these pages, these words of life so fitly spoken by thy servant, that this little volume may be made instrumental in binding up the broken-hearted, in awakening and leading to the Physician Jesus all who are yet spiritually sick, and that through this book many sons and daughters may be brought to glory, to the praise of the riches of thy grace in Jesus Christ. Amen.
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